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# **Discourses of Widening Participation and Social Inclusion**

**Author:** Jennifer Carr BSc (Hons) MSc (ERM)

**Discipline:** Faculty of Education and Language Studies

**Submission For:** Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the relationship between policies and initiatives designed to widen participation in post-compulsory learning and notions of social inclusion. Whilst both widening participation and social inclusion can be viewed as distinct policy areas, the focus for this research are the links between the two, the impact that these links have on the development of specific education policy initiatives and what that means for those implicated in these initiatives. This thesis begins with an examination of the way in which notions of social exclusion, lifelong learning and widening participation are constructed in policy texts and practices. I argue that dominant discourses of social inclusion, which emphasise equality of opportunity brought about through participation in paid employment, lead to an under-valuing in policy terms of learning programmes that seek to promote the wider benefits of learning. I also argue, however, that the potential exists for practitioners and learners to resist and subvert these dominant discourses. Drawing on the work of Bacchi (2002) I highlight how, through theorising the 'spaces for challenge', analysts can examine processes of micromanipulation – the unique ways in which marginalised people or groups raise problems or attempt to influence any agenda. Adopting a Foucauldian genealogical approach I explore the ways in which a specific widening participation initiative, that of Adult Learners' Week (ALW), has been used by practitioners to both engage potential learners and influence Government policy. The range of data drawn on includes archive material relating to the ALW initiative; policy texts and documents; interviews with practitioners and learners involved with ALW and other widening participation initiatives; and, participant and non-participant observations of interactions between practitioners involved in planning for and delivering ALW. In this thesis I use the ALW themes of 'Community, Culture and Citizenship', 'Equality and Diversity' and 'Skills for Life' to explore examples of micromanipulation identified in the analysis of these data. This thesis concludes with reflections on the usefulness of adopting a genealogical approach and a discussion of the lessons that can be learned from the examples of micromanipulations discussed, including the challenges to widening participation that persist.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

ACC	Association of County Councils
ACLF	Adult and Community Learning Fund
AdFLAG	Adult Financial Literacy Advisory Group
ALBSU	Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit
ALW	Adult Learners' Week
AMA	Association of Metropolitan Authorities
AOC	Association of Colleges
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BSA	Basic Skills Agency
CBI	Confederation of British Industries
CMPS	Centre for Management and Policy Studies
CPAG	Child Poverty Action Group
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSV	Community Service Volunteers
DES	Department of Education and Science
DFEE	Department for Education and Employment
DFES	Department for Education and Skills
DTI	Department for Trade and Industry
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EC	European Commission
EDAP	Employee Development and Achievement Programme
eGU	e-Government Unit
ERoSH	Emerging Role of Sheltered Housing
ESF	European Social Fund
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
EU	European Union
FE	Further Education
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FSA	Financial Services Authority
GEC	General Electric Company
IAG	Information and Guidance
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IEA	Institute for Economic Affairs
ILA	Individual Learning Account
ITV	Independent Television

LEA	Local Education Authority
LEAFEA	Local Education Authorities Forum for the Education of Adults
LSC	Learning Skills Council
NAGCELL	National Advisory Group on Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning
NATFHE	National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
NHSU	National Health Service University
NIACE	National Institute for Adult Continuing Education
Ofcom	Office for Communications
OLSU	Offenders Learning and Skills Unit
PAT	Policy Action Team
PCET	Post Compulsory Education and Training
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
RHS	Royal Horticultural Society
RSA	Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce
SEU	Social Exclusion Unit
SSA	Standard Spending Assessment
SSC	Sector Skills Council
TEC	Training and Enterprise Councils
Ufi	University for Industry
WEA	Workers' Educational Association

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1 Overview**

'A central political question for Labour's first term in office will be how it negotiates between the different available discourses of social exclusion, and how, especially through the Social Exclusion Unit, it translates them into policy. Their performance will be judged not only on whether they deliver 'social inclusion', but what kind of inclusion they deliver, for whom and on what terms.'

(Levitas, 1998, p. 28)

Levitas's book, 'The Inclusive Society?' is based on the findings of a project funded by the ESRC: 'Discourses of Social Exclusion and Integration in Emergent Labour Party Policy'. Levitas carried out her research for the project during the run-up to, and immediately after, the 1997 General Election. This election saw the Labour party, or 'New Labour', come to power with an overall majority of 179 seats. Election success came after, and it has been argued as a result of, an extensive organisational and ideological remaking of the Labour party (Chadwick and Heffernan, 2003). In her book, Levitas examines 'the emergence of the idea of social exclusion within British political discourse, and identifies three competing discourses within which the concept may be deployed' (p.2). The discourses Levitas identifies are those of a redistributive, egalitarian discourse (RED); a moral, underclass discourse (MUD); and a social integrationist discourse (SID). Levitas argues that the objective of both MUD and SID is social cohesion, whilst the objective of RED is social justice (see Appendix A). Levitas goes on to explore the relationship between these discourses of social exclusion and the construction of the discourse of the 'centre-left' in British politics between 1994 – 1997. She argues that 'Labour's pursuit of a third way beyond left and right' (p.4) led to a distinctive articulation of the notion of social exclusion, and that this articulation has moved away from RED to draw on a combination of SID and MUD, thus emphasising paid employment as the main route to social inclusion.

Subsequent analyses of the New Labour Government's policies for social welfare have also highlighted a central theme of 'work not welfare' as a key discursive mechanism for social inclusion (Clarke and Newman, 1998; Lister, 1999; Gewirtz, 2000). Again, it is argued that the discourse of social inclusion contained within the New Labour project is both partial and conditional and, as a result of this, '...if the government makes a reasonable offer of a route into social inclusion, people who refuse it will be ('unreasonably') excluding themselves from society: they will be guilty of a *moral* failure - a failure to recognise their responsibilities.' (Clarke and Newman, 1998, p.107, emphasis in the original).

When it was established in 1997, the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), which at that time was based in the Cabinet Office and reported directly to the Prime Minister, was unique in terms of the British governmental structure. The membership of the SEU is a 'mix of insiders and outsiders – with people from social services, police, voluntary, church, business as well as people from national government departments' (Mulgan, 1998, p.265). The Unit is linked to the rest of government through a network of ministers and officials from each of the government departments, rather than through a separate Cabinet Committee. The general remit of the SEU was to improve government action to reduce social exclusion by producing 'joined-up solutions to joined-up problems' (SEU, 1997). One key element in many of these 'solutions' is widening participation in post-compulsory education and training.

This emphasis on the role to be played by post-compulsory education and training in combating social exclusion was addressed by Helena Kennedy in her report to the Further Education Funding Council (Kennedy, 1997). Kennedy placed a particular emphasis on the view that 'public policy for post-compulsory learning must be dramatically, systematically and consistently redirected towards *widening* rather than simply *increasing* participation and achievement' (p.22, my emphasis). Her concern was that initiatives should take account of the need to engage a much wider cross section of the population if they are to play a role in social inclusion. Similarly, McGivney (2001) argues that if the aim of Government policy is to

widen participation then, in order to realise that aim, there is a need to revise current assumptions surrounding which groups are being addressed by widening participation initiatives and to challenge perceptions that non-participation is largely due to the attitudes, inadequacies or learning deficiencies of individuals.

This concern that 'increasing' or 'deepening' participation should not be confused with 'widening' participation is echoed in other analyses of Government policies that seek to promote 'lifelong learning' (Coffield, 1999; Field, 2000). These analyses argue that Government policy that emphasises the links between paid employment and learning, or 'learning for earning', fail to recognise the barriers to participation in learning that many adults face. It has been argued that this focus on 'learning for earning' marginalises those who might be viewed as 'poor investments' (Riddell *et al*, 2000; Bullen, 2002) and results in a system of post-compulsory education that focuses funding on accredited learning programmes that emphasise the development of employment skills rather than any other educational goal (Jackson and Whitwell, 2000; Crowther, 2000; Martin, 2000; Preece, 2001).

Whilst both widening participation and social inclusion can be viewed as distinct policy areas, the focus of my research is the link between the two, the impact that this link has on the development of specific education policy initiatives and what that means for those implicated in these initiatives. As such, the research questions that have informed this research project are:

- ◆ How is the notion of widening participation in post-compulsory education linked to social inclusion in educational policy texts, promotional materials and practices?
- ◆ Who do these discourses include/exclude, and how?
- ◆ How do these discourses affect the practice of those involved in education policy initiatives designed to facilitate the movement from non-participation to participation?

Before moving on to outline the key aspects of the three parts of this thesis, I want to outline briefly the background to my interest in exploring these particular research questions, and for adopting a particular approach to this research project. I believe that the brief overview above identifies a fruitful area for research, but my reasons for wanting to explore these questions are also related to my experiences as both a practitioner working in the post-compulsory education sector, mostly in further education colleges and centres for adult and community education, and as a student studying social policy. These two roles of practitioner and student have interacted in a number of ways. I chose to study social policy courses because I was interested in gaining a better understanding of the way in which the formulation and implementation of social policy is theorised and explained in an 'academic' setting. Gaining that understanding has led me to reflect on my own practice, but also to gain a different kind of insight into what it means to be involved in the process of 'implementing' education policy. At the same time, there has often been a certain dissonance between some of the ways in which the formulation and delivery of social policy is theorised and the everyday experiences of my working life. In particular, I have found it difficult to recognise theories of 'domination' or 'subjection' as being relevant in terms of explaining how practitioners respond to policy developments. Whilst most practitioners that work in an educational setting would recognise the feeling of dread when presented with yet another new initiative that has to be implemented, many would also recognise that the practicalities of their working lives means that they somehow have to 'get on with it' – and 'getting on with it' doesn't always involve simply complying with the stated objectives of the policy initiative. In my experience compliance is often qualified at best, and on other occasions the reaction has been one of outright subversion! Whilst the constraints placed on practice by policy cannot be ignored, the creativity displayed by practitioners in negotiating these constraints also warrants our attention. This 'messy' process of policy making and implementation is the process that I sought to capture with my research.

John Clarke ends his book 'Changing Welfare, Changing States' (2004) with what he calls 'a heartfelt plea':

'To the extent that strategies don't work as intended and people fail to come when they're called, domination is always fragile, always needs to be reproduced, always needs to search for better, more efficient and effective ways of securing its rule. In short, the non-total nature of domination and subjection 'makes a difference'. While people can still bother to be difficult, so should academic work'

(p.159).

My thesis represents my attempt to heed John Clarke's plea. I have certainly found developing an approach to my project that would capture the issues that I wanted to explore to be somewhat difficult! The remaining sections of this introduction will summarise the key aspects of each chapter of my thesis, but I will also reflect on some of the 'difficulties' I have encountered along the way. Hopefully these reflections will explain to the reader the choices I have made and my reasons for making these choices, and, in doing so, help clarify what I believe to be the usefulness of my approach.



## **1.2 Part One - 'Joining up' the issues**

The purpose of Part One of this thesis is two-fold. Firstly, I will demonstrate the links between the two notions of social exclusion and widening participation, both in terms of the way in which they are articulated within Government policy, and the way in which they are debated by social policy analysts concerned with exploring these policy developments. Secondly, I will extend my discussion of these debates to explain what I believe to be the usefulness of the 'policy-as-discourse' approach to analysing social policy.

I will begin by exploring the discourses of social exclusion identified by Levitas in more detail and discussing the links between these discourses and the approach to social policy adopted by the New Labour government – an approach that is often summarised as being based around 'third way values' (Giddens, 1998). In order to illustrate the way in which the framework of discourses outlined by Levitas might be articulated, I will then turn to the work of the SEU itself, and specifically to the example of the SEU report 'Preventing Social Exclusion' (SEU, 2000), and outline how these discourses are represented within the approach to policy-making that is adopted by the SEU. I will argue that whilst Levitas's framework is useful in that it helps us to explore the way in which discourses are deployed as part of political projects and how they are reflected in different policy implications, it is Levitas's discussion of the possibility of differing, and contested, discourses and policy outcomes that is most relevant to my project.

Throughout my discussion of Levitas's work I will make links to debates surrounding the notion of lifelong learning and approaches to widening participation in learning. In many ways these debates echo Levitas's argument in that they focus on what kind of learning is being offered, to whom and on what terms. I will discuss critiques which argue that post-compulsory education policies construct too narrow a concept of 'learning' by focusing mainly on the role that learning plays in preparing people for paid employment, and, as such, fail to recognise the role that learning can play in enhancing other areas of people's lives. I will also

discuss critiques that argue that the way in which policy is formulated suggests that there is a lack of understanding on the part of policy-makers of the barriers to participation that people may face.

Drawing on the arguments put forward by Bacchi (2000) I will consider the notion of the possibility of 'spaces for challenge', which Bacchi argues have been left under-theorised by analysts who adopt a 'policy-as-discourse' approach. Bacchi's concern is that too much emphasis is placed on the constraints imposed by discourse and, as such, the ways in which people contest discursive constructions have been made less visible. I will also outline Miller's (1993) use of the concepts of 'micromanipulation' and 'macromanipulation', concepts which Miller argues are important for understanding the processes of 'claims-making from the underside'. In my data analysis I will use these concepts to explore the ways in which practitioners seek to influence the process of policy-making through their engagement with the formal structures of policy-making and informally through their everyday practice. In this chapter, however, I will focus on the way in which the notion of 'micromanipulation' might prove useful for exploring the 'spaces for challenge'.

In the final section of Chapter 2 I will draw on the issues discussed in Janet Newman's article 'Putting the policy back into social policy' (2002) to highlight how I believe the 'new' approach to policy-making discussed by Newman could be viewed as providing 'new' opportunities to engage in practices of micro-manipulation. My final task will be to outline how the issues discussed in this chapter relate to the work of the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) and the Adult Learners' Week (ALW) initiative, which provided the settings for the data collection for this project.

In the introduction to her paper Bacchi uses the term 'lacunae' to refer to the areas that she believes are under-theorised. A simple dictionary definition of the term lacuna states that it is 'a gap or hiatus; a cavity', but if we look at the way in which the term is used in different

contexts then the concept takes on a different meaning. As a term used in medical science it can be a cavity in the bone that contains the cells that are essential for the production of the bone matter itself. In an architectural context this cavity or gap in the structure is often left deliberately to allow for some space for decoration or embellishment. In both instances the gap or space does not equate to 'nothingness'. It either serves the purpose of actively producing the very matter that surrounds it, or provides a space for the creation of something that will affect the overall form of the finished product. I draw attention to these uses of the term to highlight what I think should be the purpose of researching these gaps or spaces. I will argue that by focusing on these 'spaces for challenge' we not only gain a better understanding of the processes of policy development and implementation, but also make visible the possibilities for resistance and subversion. To quote again from John Clarke (2004) when he discusses the importance of not constructing analyses 'that reproduce or reinforce the illusions that dominant forces try to construct':

...

We are pressed upon by the weight of these stories of power. They testify to power's all-embracing, all pervading and inescapable achievements. They squeeze - in material and symbolic ways - the spaces that we inhabit. The point of an orientation towards the constructed, contested and contradictory composition of the world is to create breathing and thinking space: to lift the pressure, to find the 'leaky' parts of the system and the weak points of its embrace.

(p.5)

The overarching aim of Part One of my thesis is to bring together the issues and concerns that this project seeks to explore, and to explain my reasons for adopting a particular approach to identifying the 'leaky parts of the system', the 'spaces for challenge'.

### **1.3 PART TWO - Doing a genealogical analysis: how difficult can it be?**

In the early stages of carrying out this research project, and having clarified in my own mind the issues relating to the analysis of policy that I felt my project should address and the specific area of policy that I wanted to explore in more detail, the idea of carrying out a genealogical analysis seemed to me to be not only appealing, in as much as it seemed to capture the type of analysis that I thought would be most useful, but reasonably straightforward. I think that this false sense of security stemmed from having found examples of work that drew on Foucauldian approaches to discourse analysis reasonably easy to understand.

When I researched the use of genealogical methods further, however, I felt that examples of genealogical analysis often described the results of the analysis in sufficient detail, but were less specific in terms of the actual methods used. Collection of the data was often described, as were the examples found in the analysis to illustrate 'the discourses', but what seemed to be missing was the detail of why a certain group of statements were considered significant, whilst others less so. It was difficult to get a clear picture of what a discourse would 'look like'. Even after reading a considerable amount of literature relating to the analysis of 'the discourses' of one issue or another I would find myself asking 'but how did they do that?'. Whilst I could write a definition of what discourse/discourses were I couldn't quite articulate the process behind identifying them.

A further complication arose when I tried to relate examples of genealogical analysis to my planned project. In the initial project proposal I had stated that I would carry out a genealogical analysis of a set of data that would consist mainly of texts, and that this analysis would then inform a second set of data that would be collected through interview and observations. In my mind I had a project that formed two distinct stages. What I hadn't thought through sufficiently was the degree to which interviews and observations would

influence the way in which I approached the analysis of the documents, and indeed how they would affect the process of deciding how to go about collecting the relevant documents.

The key element in finding a way to think through the way in which the project was developing was the distinction between Foucault's notion of archaeology and genealogy, and in Chapter 4 I discuss the differences between these two notions and the way in which I applied them to my project.

Many authors who have explored the work of Foucault have outlined the development of the notions of archaeology and genealogy and the relationship between the two, and whilst different interpretations may not always be 'outright contradictory, (they do) unfold the Foucauldian method in various dimensions' (Tamboukou, 1999, p.204). In my opinion the closest Foucault himself came to providing an explanation for how the two concepts of archaeology and genealogy were developed and how they interrelate was in an essay entitled 'The Concern for the Truth'. He wrote 'If we were to characterise it in two terms, then archaeology would be the appropriate methodology of (the) analyses of local discursivities, and genealogy would be the tactics whereby, on the basis of the descriptions of these discursivities, the subjected knowledges which were thus released would be brought into play' (Foucault, 1988, p85). If we are to separate the two ideas, then:

- archaeology could be best described as the way in which the researcher should go about exploring and mapping all of the uses of discourse that are, or have been, present in the construction of a social phenomenon/issue/ problem, whereas
- genealogy is the process whereby the researcher seeks to explore how all these discourses have impacted and inter-related and what the effects of this have been.

When discussing the link between the archaeology and genealogy, Cain (1993) states 'while it is possible and useful to do archaeology without genealogy, it is not possible to do

genealogy without archaeology' (p94). Andersen (2003), on the other hand, states 'it is impossible, in my understanding, to conduct a knowledge-archaeological analysis without combining it with a genealogical analysis' (p.17). I do not intend to attempt to reconcile these two positions, rather I wish to highlight that if the aim of any project is to carry out a genealogical analysis, then the process of archaeology is an essential part of that analysis and, as such, will form an integral part of the methodological approach that I outline in Chapter 4.

I will begin by drawing on Foucault's discussion of the nature of historiographies and his rationale for developing historical accounts that identified 'the accidents, the minute deviations, the reversals, the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that give birth to those things that have value for us' (1971, p.81). I will discuss how I believe the approach that Foucault suggests is particularly suited to examining the processes of micromanipulation and identifying possible 'spaces for challenge'. I will consider the relationship between the two concepts of archaeology and genealogy, and, using the idea of a 'family tree' as illustration, I will outline the part played by each of these concepts in the process of genealogical analysis.

I will then move on to look at the process of carrying out a genealogical analysis in more detail. I will discuss the differences between the process of analysing the regularities within discourse, the archaeological stage, and the process of analysing ruptures and discontinuities within discourse, the genealogical stage. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault (1986) identifies three concepts that underpin his archaeological analyses - statements, discourses and discursive formations. I believe that my uncertainty as to how other analysts have gone about identifying 'the discourses' was due to a lack of understanding on my part of the process of identifying statements, the building blocks of the discourse. Anderson (2003) states that Foucault was very precise about what constituted a statement and he argues that analysts should focus on the four required aspects of a

statement i.e. their objects, subjects, conceptual networks and strategies, in order to begin to construct the archive for any project. In Chapter 4 I will discuss these four aspects of the statement and discuss further how each aspect informs the compilation of any particular archive of discourses. I will then outline how these aspects inform the identification and analysis of discursive formations. I will then move on to discuss the genealogical stage of analysing the archive, returning to the research questions that inform this project in order to relate the issues that I wish to explore to this process of analysis.

In the final section of Chapter 4 I will discuss the Foucault's notion of the 'general archive' (1998, p.263) and the way in which this notion helped me think through the iterative nature of the process of data collection for this project. In order to demonstrate how I went about establishing my general archive I will focus on three aspects of the Adult Learners' Week initiative – the themes that provide the focus for events and activities, the ALW awards and the partnerships between practitioners and organisations, which are an integral part of the delivery of the initiative – and discuss how each of these strands of data collection contributed to the project as a whole.

Having thought through, applied and written about the process of doing a genealogy, the issue then arose of how I would bring together this process and the details of the analysis in the format required for the thesis. On the one hand to present all of the analysis at the level of detail described in Chapter 4 would have meant exceeding the word limit many times over, but to move straight to presenting the data at the level of the genealogy seemed too big a jump - a bit like saying 'trust me, this works!'. I felt that I needed to find at least one example that I could use to both illustrate the process in detail, the aspect of carrying out a genealogy that I often felt was neglected in other examples of genealogical analysis, and also orientate the reader to the more 'broad brush' analysis.

Before I began to look at the NIACE archives relating specifically to the Adult Learners' Week initiative itself I had set myself the task of 'mapping out' government policy relating to post-compulsory education at the time that the initiative was being proposed. In Chapter 5 I look in detail at the proposals contained within the White Paper 'Education and Training for the 21st Century' (DES, 1991) and the debates that surrounded the publication of this paper and the subsequent legislation, The Further and Higher Education Act (1992).

The White Paper proposed a major reorganisation of the system for delivering post-compulsory education in England and Wales and as such had significant repercussions for all aspects of this sector. In implementing these proposals the Government met considerable opposition from certain groups within the post-compulsory education sector. Within the framework of a genealogical analysis this particular Government initiative could be said to represent a point of 'rupture', and as such it provides an instance in which contrasting, or opposing, discourses are brought into sharper focus. In Chapter 5 I will examine two discursive formations, 'education for adults' and 'adult education', which I will argue are deployed through the Government's attempts to gain support for the proposals contained in the White Paper and to negotiate the passage of the subsequent Bill through the legislative process, and the campaign launched by a group of educational organisations and institutions who attempted to bring about changes to the proposed Bill. Although the Bill did pass through the legislative process relatively unchanged, the campaign against the White Paper proposals provides the opportunity to illustrate the processes of micromanipulation, which I will discuss in Chapter 2.

In exploring the discourses of widening participation and social inclusion one of the concerns of this thesis is the way in which initiatives that relate specifically to education policy interact with a much broader spectrum of social policy initiatives. In other words, the focus is on the way in which discourses within an educational policy setting are part of a much wider discursive formation. The proposals contained within the White Paper reflected reforms to



education policy that were taking place in other sectors, rather than just post compulsory education. For example, the proposals in the White Paper are justified through statements concerning the success of previous reforms in compulsory education and some areas of higher education. Alongside this, however, these reforms in education policy can be related to a series of reforms that had affected the provision of social welfare as a whole. The analysis of this example provided an opportunity to demonstrate the way in which developments in the wider social policy environment link to specific proposals for education policy. In particular, it enables me to illustrate the way in which the notion of conceptual networks informs a genealogical analysis.

My third reason for abstracting this example relates to what I believe to be two particularly useful aspects of a genealogical approach to policy analysis. Firstly, as NIACE was one of the organisations involved coordinating the campaign against the White Paper proposals the archive material available to me came from a wide variety of sources. They varied from policy documents and formal responses from organisations to those documents to handwritten notes and memos between individuals involved in the campaign. As these events took place before the use of electronic communication was commonplace there were many examples of what could be viewed as more 'informal' communication between colleagues. I believe that the process of analysing the statements, using the framework outlined in Chapter 4, and the relationships between the statements helped me synthesise this range of data. In particular the concept of strategic formations, the relationship between the status of statements derived from the time, place and materiality of their origin, was useful in terms of exploring the relationships between this diverse range of data.

Secondly, one of the things that struck me as I read through these data was how unprepared the Government of the day appeared to be for the controversy caused by their proposals. I will discuss these proposals in more detail in Chapter 5, but one of the most controversial aspects of the White Paper was the distinction made between 'education for adults', which

was to be included within the new system of post-compulsory provision, and 'courses for the leisure interests of adults', which would not. The proposals relating to these two categories do not form a major part of the White Paper. On the whole the proposals are orientated towards 'school leavers' and 'young people', with the appearance of a 'commonsense' assumption that the requirements for 'education for adults' would coincide with those for the provision for these groups. Similarly, there seems to be an assumption that the categorisation of some forms of learning as 'leisure', rather than 'education', would be unproblematic.

Reading through the various documents relating to the Government's response to the issues raised by the campaigners gives the impression that the Ministers themselves had not formulated a language for talking about the distinction they had made between 'education' and 'leisure'. The lack of clarity in answers given by Ministers as to the nature of this distinction, and particularly the rationale for different approaches in funding, led to Lord Preston asking during a debate in the House of Lords (7th June 1991), 'Is the whole of adult education being determined by some antipathy on the part of the Department of Education towards flower arranging?'.

Indeed Ministers had to concede that, with regards to these categorisations, 'the White Paper did not define adequately the types of education and the roles to be played' (Answer to a Written Question; to Andrew Smith MP from Tim Eggar MP, Minister of State for Education, 25th July 1991, House of Commons Library).

It was not only the Government however who had problems articulating the rationale for their course of action. Although the group campaigning against the proposals could give definite examples of why they believed they 'would not work', their opposition to the use of the term 'leisure' to describe certain types of learning was something that was expressed less clearly. In various documents there were references to a 'philosophy' of adult education that would

be marginalised by the proposals. There seemed to be a sense in which some important aspect, or purpose, of 'education' would be lost if the proposals went through to the legislative stage unaltered.

As a practitioner working in post-compulsory education one of the possible dangers of researching this area was that the 'taken-for-granted' nature of these statements is left unexamined. As a practitioner I recognise the philosophy that some of those involved in the campaign against the White Paper felt was threatened. In a broader context, to be working in any area of welfare provision at this time involved being exposed to the Government's justification for changes to the system of welfare provision on a regular basis. Discussing issues in relation to provision with colleagues now will often lead to references to 'before/after 1992'. Whilst accepting that no analytical framework will automatically ensure a more objective approach, and indeed having stated my concerns regarding approaches that seek to 'step outside of the discourse', I believe that the exploration of objects and subjects that are articulated within the discourses of 'education for adults and 'adult education' helped me unpack some of the 'taken-for-granted' that were present both in the data and my reading of it.

On completing the analysis I still had the problem of how to move from this detailed analysis to wider context of the genealogy as a whole. My solution was to return again to the debates around notions of widening participation and social inclusion that I have discussed in Part 1 in order to make links between those discussions and the specific example of the White Paper proposals. In doing this I felt that had established sufficient points of reference to make it explicit to the reader 'where I was coming from' and in the final subsection of Chapter 5 I return to my focus on the possibilities of 'spaces for challenge' in order to provide a preliminary framework for 'where I am going to'. That is to say, I outline my starting point for the analysis of the Adult Learners' Week initiative itself.

#### **1.4 PART THREE - Adult Learners' Week: 'a very good way of punching them on the nose!'**

The quote above is taken from an interview with Alan Tuckett (Director, NIACE) in which he outlines the connections between the Adult Learners' Week initiative and the policy priorities of NIACE that are reflected in the work of the organisation as a whole:

'I think we are quite good at policy. It's not that Adult Learners' Week has done that.....but Adult Learners' Week is a vehicle for reinforcing the priorities of NIACE and its sister agencies' (Interview, January 2004).

In this interview Alan Tuckett went on to discuss how the idea for the Adult Learners' Week initiative came about and to detail various influences on the development of the initiative over the previous twelve years. One of the issues he discussed was that whilst the initiative is primarily 'an opportunity to celebrate, promote and advance all forms of adult learning' (Tuckett, 2004) the format of the initiative makes it useful in terms of highlighting policy issues that are of concern to NIACE as an organisation. In their advocacy role throughout the year NIACE is engaged in 'maintaining good working relationships with .... government and politicians' and responding 'to documents and papers issued by other organisations, calls for evidence by various committees, commissions and enquiries' (NIACE, 2005), but once a year the Adult Learners' Week initiative provides the metaphorical 'punch on the nose'!

In one sense the initiative could be viewed as a continuation of the work that NIACE and its members and partners carry out - one of the ways in which the organisation seeks to deliver its aims and objectives. On the other hand 'the Week' , as it is often referred to by those involved in co-ordinating the initiative, is distinctive in the way that it brings together activities that engage many different groups of people, from Government ministers through to the learners themselves, under the umbrella of this one initiative. It is this framework of the relationship between the overarching aims and objectives and the specific examples that I believed would be useful in illustrating the notion of 'micromanipulation' that I have sought to

highlight throughout this thesis. The common thread that will run throughout Part Three of this thesis will be the relationship between the constraints imposed by the policy environment of the time, the larger structure of macromanipulation, and the solutions found by practitioners to these constraints, the examples of micromanipulation.

I think one of the most difficult aspects of summarising the data analysis in these four chapters was finding a way in which to demonstrate the variety of ways in which the initiative has developed over the years and yet continue to trace the discursive connections between the different elements – and at the same time in a way as not to leave the reader totally bemused!

My solution has been to begin this part of the thesis by outlining the way in which the themes and awards of the first Adult Learners' Week, ALW 1992, could be viewed as examples of practitioners engaging with the possible 'spaces for challenge' that I considered when concluding Chapter 5. I have then identified a number of broad strands that bring together sets of relationships or connections that I believe encompass the processes of micromanipulation I have identified through my analysis. These four broad strands provide a workable 'model' within which I can present the links between the annual presentation of the initiative, but still capture the notion of the 'the accidents, the minute deviations, the reversals, the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations' (Foucault, 1971, p.81) that are an essential part of the genealogical analysis.

I want to discuss briefly issues that arose as I thought through the format for these four chapters. I acknowledge that any model:

'facilitates a certain understanding, highlighting certain features while diminishing the significance of others; it is a selective rewriting of a situation whose complexity entails the possibility of other alternative models, models that highlight different features, presenting different emphases'

(Grosz, 1994, p.209)

Bearing this in mind, one thing that I was conscious of when planning the format of the chapters was that there was a temptation to always 'accentuate the positive'. Indeed when discussing my reasons for choosing a genealogical approach to this project I outlined how I believed such an approach would help 'balance out' other accounts that focused on privileging the power of material practices over discursive practices, arguing that material practices of dominant interests will always determine the outcome of discursive practices.

The launch by NIACE, in 2005, of the 'Fairer Funding for Adult Learning' campaign provides an example of how it is not possible to ignore the processes of macromanipulation. The campaign was launched in response to policy developments relating to changes in government funding priorities:

Since 1997 public spending on adult learning has increased: the most recent spending review announced a 7.5 per cent increase in Learning and Skills Council budgets. More opportunities have been provided for adults to learn new skills, to develop their learning and to grow as individuals. But the Government has not provided the funding to deliver its ambitious strategies, and now it wants to focus on a narrower and less flexible set of national and regional priorities: squeezing out local choices and concentrating on learners aged 17–19, and on the one-step acquisition of level 2 qualifications. So, although spending on further education has risen, the way the money has been divided up means that the amount available for people aged 19 and above has been cut by 3 per cent.

(Smart, 2005, p.6)

The campaign encourages people to write to their MPs, publicise the concerns through local media, make use of their personal contacts to publicise the campaign as widely as possible and write letters to the Chairman and Chief Executive of the LSC. The need for such a campaign, and the similarities in the concerns voiced in this campaign and the campaign against the proposals contained within the 1992 White Paper, illustrates why analyses that focus on the way in which policy developments continually reinforce structural inequalities seem to deploy such explanatory reach. If we look at some of the concerns of organisations

that are involved in the campaign we might well assume that ‘nothing much changes’. Whilst on the one hand I would argue against adopting an approach that focuses simply on the continuities between the two campaigns, I recognise that to ignore them would be equally unhelpful. In Chapters 7, 8 and 9 of this thesis I will use data collected in relation to three of the themes of ALW, ‘Community, Culture and Citizenship’, ‘Equality and Diversity’ and ‘Skills for Life’, to examine how practitioners have used the ALW initiative to contest, subvert and negotiate policy developments. In the final sections of each chapter, however, I will direct my summary towards continuing issues relating to participation and inclusion – issues that I will return to in more detail in Conclusion of this thesis.

## **Chapter Two: Social Exclusion and Widening Participation**

### **2.1 Introduction**

When the SEU was launched in 1998 the definition of social exclusion provided in SEU policy documents stated that:

'Social exclusion is a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.'

In section 2.2 of this chapter I will look in more detail at the way in which this 'shorthand term' is articulated in policy texts. I will begin by outlining the three discourses of social exclusion identified by Levitas (1998) – the redistributive, egalitarian discourse (RED); the moral, underclass discourse (MUD); and, the social integrationist discourse (SID) (See Appendix A). In order to illustrate the usefulness of Levitas's framework, I will consider how the notion of social exclusion is constructed within the SEU report 'Preventing Social Exclusion' (SEU, 2001).

Whilst RED, MUD and SID might represent a diverse array of possible social policy interventions and possible outcomes, it should not be assumed that they are all encompassing. Levitas makes it clear that she considers her framework to be 'principally an analytical device' (p.3). Her aim is to trace the way in which discourses of exclusion are actively deployed as part of a political project. As part of her discussion of this political project Levitas discusses how debates surrounding the notions of a 'stakeholder society' and 'communitarianism' have influenced New Labour's deployment of discourses of social exclusion. I will outline key aspects of this discussion and explore how this discussion helps illustrate the contested nature of discourse. Throughout section 2.2 I will make links between the discourses of social exclusion identified by Levitas and debates concerning the nature and value of lifelong learning.



In section 2.3 I will turn my attention to the notion of widening participation in order to explore some of the issues that I have already highlighted in the introduction to this thesis. Firstly I will outline trends in adult participation in learning that have been reported in an annual survey produced by NIACE from 1996 onwards. These surveys have reported that, whilst there may be fluctuations in overall rates of participation, certain trends have remained relatively unchanged. I will then draw on McGivney's (1990; 2001) research into widening participation to explore her suggestions as to why these trends in non-participation have remained so consistent. Drawing on the findings of three widening participation projects (Crossan et. al. 2000; Preece, 2001; Warmington, 2002) I will explore how practitioners have sought to highlight the barriers to participation that some adults face and the suggestions made for how these barriers might be overcome.

I will then move on to consider the argument put forward by Bacchi (2000) that despite the greater attention being paid by social policy analysts to the role that discourses play in the construction of social policy issues and policy interventions, there are still areas that remain under-theorised. I will discuss how I believe the particular focus outlined by Bacchi, that of 'the spaces for challenge', could prove useful for analysing the ways in which practitioners and learners engage with the discourses of widening participation and social inclusion, and I will explain how I envisage the concepts of micromanipulation and macromanipulation (Miller, 1993) could play a part in this analysis.

In section 2.4, in order to reorientate the discussion back towards current Government policy and to provide a context for the discussions in the next chapter, I will turn to the issues outlined by Newman (2002) regarding the 'new' approach to policy making. To conclude this section I will discuss why I chose the work of NIACE as the setting to, as Newman puts it, 'analyse and understand what is going on in social policy' (p.354).

## **2.2 Social exclusion: a 'shorthand term'**

Levitas situates the development of the redistributive, egalitarian discourse within the work of the anti-poverty movement and critical social policy analysts. The discourse of RED emphasises the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and social exclusion; equality of outcome, rather than equality of opportunity; and the redistribution of wealth and other resources through state intervention.

Levitas highlights, as key texts, Townsend's (1979) study 'Poverty in the United Kingdom' and the publication in 1997 by the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) of 'Britain Divided: The growth of social exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s' (Walker and Walker, eds.). Levitas states that the period between these two publications was one where the notion of social exclusion 'gained currency in critical social policy' (p.11). She argues that the key difference between these two texts is that whilst Townsend had focused on the way in which poverty can result in exclusion social participation, and in doing so had argued for a better understanding of the issue of relative poverty, the CPAG text also highlights processes whereby 'social exclusion can be a cause, rather than just a result, of poverty' (p.11). Levitas relates this particular construction of social exclusion to debates within critical social policy concerning the notion of 'social citizenship'. Citizenship, in this sense, is extended beyond the legal status conferred by a nation state which entitles an individual to certain civil and political rights and includes a 'social element':

'By the social element I mean the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share the social heritage and to live as a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in society'

(Marshall, 1950, p.8)

Highlighting the work of Lister (1990), Levitas states that social exclusion, as constructed within RED, can be understood as 'the antithesis of citizenship' (p.12) in the sense that if people are excluded from the full rights of citizenship their ability to fulfil the responsibilities

conferred by citizenship is also curtailed. Levitas states that 'the evolution of RED took place in a political context where social citizenship rights were under continued attack from the New Right' (p.14). It is from within that attack on citizenship rights that a moral, underclass discourse emerges.

Whilst the moral dimension of this discourse can be traced back to the Victorian distinction of the deserving/undeserving poor (Lister, 1999), the notion of an underclass is more recent. The notion of an underclass had been put forward first by theorists who would have been more immediately associated with the left wing of British politics, for example Field (1990). The emphasis in this conceptualisation of the underclass was on structural inequalities and exclusion from citizenship: 'the existence of an underclass casts doubt on the social contract itself. It means that citizenship has become an exclusive rather than an inclusive status. Some are full citizens, some are not' (p.16). In one sense this interpretation of 'the underclass' would be more readily associated with RED. Levitas, however, highlights that even within this conceptualisation of the underclass there was a 'moral dimension' in that concern was expressed 'about the moral consequences of benefit dependency and the erosion of initiative' (p.17).

Levitas discusses how the notion of the underclass began to be associated, especially within the mass media, less with structural inequalities and more with ideas of cultural and moral inequalities. The combination of MUD was consolidated in the work carried out by Charles Murray (1990, 1994) for the Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA). Murray (1990) argued that an underclass had long existed in the USA, and he described his visit to Britain in terms of 'a visitor from a plague area come to see if the disease is spreading' (p.23). Murray's language of social contagion linked to the notion of the moral inferiority of the underclass led to 'monstrously divisive consequences for the poor of Thatcherite policies.... consequences of the poor for the comfortable majority, where redistribution gave way to retribution' (Levitas, 1998. p.20). The discourse of MUD emphasises a culture of dependency amongst those

excluded from the mainstream: a culture that is encouraged and supported by state welfare benefits. The political context in which MUD emerged was that of the social policies instigated by right-wing governments in both Britain and the USA. Levitas argues that starting point of a social, integrationist discourse is situated in social policy developments within the European Union.

Early definitions of social exclusion that emerged from the European Commission emphasised a broad range of citizenship rights:

‘Social exclusion refers to the multiple and changing factors resulting in people being excluded from the normal exchanges, practices and rights of modern society. Poverty is one of the most obvious factors, but social exclusion also refers to inadequate rights in housing, education, health and access to services

...

The Commission believes that a fatalistic acceptance of social exclusion must be rejected and that all Community citizens have a right to the respect of human dignity’

(Commission of the European Communities, 1993, p.1)

In 1994 the EU Poverty Programme, which had formed an integral part of the EC’s approach to social policy since 1974, was discontinued and tackling social exclusion became an objective for the allocation of European structural funds (Percy-Smith, 2000). Levitas acknowledges that there are a number of discourses of social exclusion that are deployed within European social policy, but she argues that SID is one such discourse and that it is ‘embedded in the documents and policy instruments of the European Union itself’ (p.22) and that key European policy papers deploy a narrow definition of social exclusion. Levitas looks in detail at the policy documents ‘European Social Policy: a way forward for the Union’ and ‘Growth, Competitiveness, Employment: the challenges and ways forward into the 21st (EC, 1994a and 1994b). She argues that although these policy documents are supposed to focus on social rather than purely economic policy, the language used reflects the SID emphasis on paid employment as a route to social inclusion. She highlights, as examples:

- 'Social exclusion' and 'exclusion from paid work' are terms that are used interchangeably.
- A section entitled 'the free movement of persons' goes on to discuss 'the free movement of workers'.
- The 'promotion of social integration of disabled people' is a discussion about training and assistance to enter the labour market.
- The entitlement to social rights and welfare benefits within the European Union: paid workers, self-employed people and those exercising their right to remain after ending employment have full social rights in their country of residence. However, members of their families only have derivative rights. Non-employed people not attached to a worker do not acquire any social rights and their freedom of movement within the EU is limited by the condition that they do not become a charge on the welfare system of the host country

(Levitas, 1998, p26).

After outlining the discourses of RED, MUD and SID, Levitas goes on to examine how the emerging policies of New Labour have deployed these discourses. Levitas's conclusion is that 'the developing discourse of New Labour has shifted it significantly away from RED towards an inconsistent combination of SID and MUD' (p.28). In the next subsection, in order to illustrate how Levitas's framework of discourses can be used as a tool for analysis, I will apply the framework to a policy document produced by the SEU, 'Preventing Social Exclusion' (2001),

### 2.2.1 The Social Exclusion Unit: providing 'joined-up solutions to joined-up problems'

'Preventing Social Exclusion' (SEU, 2001) was published in March 2001 shortly before the announcement by the Government that the General Election would be held on June 4<sup>th</sup>, a year before the end of New Labour's first term in office was due to end. By this stage the

SEU had reported on all of the issues that the New Labour government had identified as the initial concerns for the Unit when it came into being in August 1997:

- Truancy and School Exclusion (SEU, 1998a)
- Rough Sleeping (SEU, 1998b)
- Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (SEU, 1998c)
- Teenage Pregnancy (SEU, 1999a)
- Bridging the Gap: New Opportunities for 16 - 18 year olds not in education, employment or training (SEU, 1999b)

Each of the individual SEU reports is compiled in a similar way, containing sections that describe the nature of the problem the report seeks to address, what has caused the problem and how the problem will be solved, including any progress made to date. The document 'Preventing Social Exclusion' draws on all these reports for its content, and one way of identifying the way in which the SEU constructs the notion of social exclusion, and of relating this construction to the discourses of RED, SID and MUD, is to examine the way in which this report constructs social exclusion as being problematic and the way in which certain interventions are legitimated, whilst others are ignored.

### ***What is social exclusion?***

The report 'Preventing Social Exclusion' begins with a section entitled 'Social exclusion and why it matters' (p.11) and this section begins with a listing of social problems that are linked to social exclusion. This list of issues is then supported with data, mostly quantitative and in the form of charts and tables, which, it is stated, illustrate the 'trends' relating to social exclusion. These data relate to:

- long-term unemployment;
- workless households
- exclusion from school;
- drug use;
- children living in low income household;

- income inequality;
- the numeracy of 13 year olds;
- adult literacy;
- 18 year olds in learning;
- teenage births ; and
- types and levels of crime.

(SEU, 2001, p6-13)

The only context given for these data is that they demonstrate that social exclusion has intensified, and the situation in the UK is worse than in other countries. The commentary that follows constructs links between the social problems highlighted in these data. The report states that 'the most important characteristic of social exclusion is that these problems are linked, and can combine to create a complex and fast-moving vicious circle' (p.4). The problems that are then listed link, for example, rough sleeping to serious alcohol problems and drug problems; being in prison to being in debt and drug use; and, young runaways to drug use and being in trouble with the police. There are further examples of this linking together of various statistics in the summary section of 'Preventing Social Exclusion':

- young runaways are 'one and half times more likely to come from a 'workless household'';
- '56% of prisoners are unemployed before sentencing':
- 'older people are more at risk of falling into poverty' is linked to them being 'subject to discrimination in employment': and,
- minority ethnic groups are 'more likely to be poor and to be unemployed'.

Another way in which social exclusion is constructed as problematic is in terms of its 'costs'. The report addresses these costs under the heading 'Why social exclusion is a priority'. Both the language used in this section and the rationale that is explained are expressed in economic terms. We have higher levels of social exclusion than our European 'competitors', the 'costs' of social exclusion are high and therefore social exclusion is making this country 'uncompetitive'. This linking of the social issues to economic performance reflects a strategy that is used throughout the SEU texts of broadening the issue to make it an issue that should

concern a wider group of people than those 'individuals who experience social exclusion'. These individuals may 'underachieve in education and the labour market, have low income, have poor access to services and suffer from stress and ill-health', but there are other costs to wider society in terms of 'reduced social cohesion, higher crime and fear of crime, and higher levels of stress and reduced mobility' (SEU, 2001, p.3).

In the foreword to 'Bringing Britain Together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal', Tony Blair states that social exclusion 'shames us as a nation' and that 'we all have to pay the costs of dependency and social division' (SEU, 1988c, p.3). In the foreword to 'Preventing Social Exclusion', Tony Blair writes that 'all of us bore the costs for social breakdown' and that 'we were never going to have a successful economy while we continued to waste the talents of so many' (SEU, 2001, p.2).

Giddens (1998) has written of a dual process of social exclusion where the decisions taken by the well-off to 'opt out' of using public services has an impact on the resourcing of these services, affecting the provision of those services to those that have no other options available to them. Giddens argues that not only is there a risk of public services being underfunded, but also that they may be viewed as inferior to private services. In none of the reports from the SEU is this issue of the dual process of social exclusion addressed. Being able to 'opt out' of the provision of public services is not depicted as problematic.

One of the key characteristics of RED is that it focuses on the processes that cause inequalities. The fact that there is no mention of the effects caused by those who have the resources to 'opt out' of public services, and therefore exclude themselves, would be one indication that a redistributive egalitarian discourse is largely absent from these texts. There is no suggestion, for example, that there should be a radical redistribution of the resources that allow some groups of people to exclude themselves.



A redistributive egalitarian discourse would also emphasise that poverty is a prime cause of social exclusion. The word 'poverty' is mentioned quite frequently in the SEU texts, for example 'older people are more at risk of falling into poverty'. But, returning again to the links made in the documents, this is because they have been 'subject to discrimination in employment'. These older people 'fall' into poverty because they do not have, or have not had, the opportunity to provide for themselves through paid employment. It is paid employment that provides the solution to poverty and very little mention is made of the possibility of reducing their poverty through increases in benefit levels as would be promoted in RED. Even where the issue of income inequality is mentioned in the list of indicators for social exclusion (SEU, 2001, p.77, chart.1.24), the chart that is used to illustrate this issue is concerned with 'disposable income'. The chart does not give the measures for either the bottom or top 10<sup>th</sup> percentiles and has the effect of rendering the very rich, the very poor, and the extent of the difference between the two, invisible.

The narrow definition of social inclusion represented by SID, that of participation in paid work, is very much part of the SEU's conceptualisation of social exclusion. Of the eleven indicators of social exclusion listed in 'Preventing Social Exclusion' (p.5) eight are explicitly linked to paid employment, or the potential to gain the skills necessary for paid employment. One notable absence from the policy areas that are addressed by the SEU, however, is inequalities of pay and conditions in the labour market. When social exclusion is being defined in any of the SEU policy documents, there is no mention at all of inequalities between paid workers.

### ***What are the causes of social exclusion?***

There are three main areas identified in SEU policy documents as supplying the causes of social exclusion. These are economic change, social change and the role of government in relation to these changes. The first point to note about the way social exclusion is problematised here is that although all three of these issues are identified as 'causes' there is

a difference in the role that they play in creating social exclusion. Economic change and social change in the UK are both depicted as having been inevitable and not directly the responsibility of government: they are 'forces that affected most Western countries' (SEU, 2001, p.4). The difference between the UK and its European competitors is that, within the UK, these changes have not been managed effectively.

The economic changes have led to a 'move to high-skill, high tech industries' and the social changes are reflected in 'the increasing rates of family breakdown'. The change in the industrial base of the UK is cited as a cause of unemployment and subsequent low income. 'Low income households' and 'family breakdown' are cited contributory factors in teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, truancy from school, children not continuing in education past the age of 18 and rough sleeping.

'Preventing Social Exclusion' states that the role of Government was to manage these changes and help people adjust to their effects. Government policies, and it should be noted these are the policies of the previous administration, 'had not coped well with helping people to adapt to economic and social changes' (p.19). What is missing from the way in which these changes are problematised is the idea that government could have taken a role in shaping this economic and social change. In linking these changes in the UK to changes in other countries, and by not questioning the inevitability of these processes, the interventions that are constructed as available and plausible are limited.

It is individuals who are required to 'acquire skills and keep them up to date' lest they be 'left behind or excluded altogether' (p.18). This focus on individual responsibility is echoed in other SEU policy documents. In the foreword to 'Bringing Britain Together; a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal' (SEU, 1998c) the Prime Minister states that success in overcoming the difficulties that have been caused by economic and social change depends on 'communities themselves taking the responsibility to make things better' (p.1). In another

foreword (SEU, 1999b, p.7) the Prime Minister states that young people should be given the chance 'to make a better life for themselves and a bigger contribution to society'. Throughout all the SEU policy documents there is this emphasis on individual responsibility or 'community' responsibility. The responsibility of government is to provide individuals or groups with the opportunity to assume these responsibilities and then, when they have done so, to match the fulfilment of these responsibilities with certain rights.

This matching of rights with responsibilities is a key feature of the policy interventions that are depicted as legitimate in SEU policy texts. When addressing the role that government has played in the causes of social exclusion, all the documents mention the 'perverse effects' that previous government policies have had. For example: 'there has been a failure on the part of government to match rights and responsibilities, with a passive welfare state that sometimes trapped people on benefits rather than enabling them to help themselves' (SEU, 2001, p20.)

Again, the lack of focus on the processes that cause inequality means that RED is notable by its absence in these SEU texts. The notion that certain economic changes cannot be avoided, and the only legitimate role for government is in helping people to adjust to the changes, means that the radical redistribution of resources and power that is implicated in RED is ignored. There is no questioning of the power of the vested interests of business to exploit through globalisation or suggestions as to how government could prevent this.

The focus on the need for individuals to acquire relevant skills and to keep them updated in order to insure themselves, as it were, against being socially excluded does reflect the narrow definition of social exclusion that is part of the social integrationist discourse. The linking of unemployment to low income, and then low income to all kinds of social problems obscures the question of why there is a link between not being in paid employment and poverty. It also obscures the differences between the resources that individuals might

already have which enable them to be better placed to acquire the 'relevant skills' and to keep them 'updated'. Most importantly, it constructs paid employment as the plausible route from exclusion to inclusion.

An interesting point is how the causes of social exclusion identified in the SEU texts relate to a moral underclass discourse. The main focus of the social changes that are outlined is referred to as 'family breakdown' and this might be most immediately associated with MUD. In this document, however, the 'moral' aspect of this discourse is more carefully negotiated than has often been the case in the past. 'Lone parent households', rather than 'single mothers', are depicted as a problem mainly because they lead to low incomes rather than being in some way intrinsically 'immoral'. Family breakdown is described as leaving people 'less well equipped to cope with other difficulties they may face'. That is not to say aspects of MUD cannot be found in the SEU texts. Family breakdown is linked in the texts to a host of other social problems often in quite an unquestioning way. The notions of a 'passive welfare state' and people being 'trapped' on benefits, combined with the assertion that it is the responsibility of the individual to respond to the opportunities for 'inclusion' offered by Government all reflect elements of the communitarian perspectives that underpin the moral underclass discourse.

Whilst RED, MUD and SID might represent a diverse array of possible social policy interventions and possible outcomes, it should not be assumed that they are all encompassing. Levitas (1998) points out that she herself does not 'write from within RED, although my sympathies with this will be clear' (p.6). Her identification of sites of contestation between RED, MUD and SID enable her to hypothesise that 'the idea of an inclusive society might yet inform a further, more radical discourse and even, eventually, a more radical politics'. Elsewhere Levitas (1990, 2001a) has argued that in order for society to be truly 'inclusive' there needs to be a re-valuing of all human activity and that the link between paid employment and income needs to be broken to ensure an adequate livelihood for all. The

redistribution which Levitas advocates here is not, as in RED, the redistribution of wealth within a capitalist society, but an end to a system which allows capital to accrue the social product. In one sense it could be argued that Levitas has imposed an explanatory boundedness herself by not extending her framework beyond RED, MUD and SID. Indeed, elsewhere Levitas has argued for the efficacy of a 'utopian method of thinking about the future, rather than simply extrapolating from present conditions' (Levitas, 2001a, p.449). What Levitas seeks to emphasise, to make explicit, is that there are competing discourses of social exclusion, that they are actively deployed as part of political projects and that these discourses are reflected in different policy implications. The document 'Preventing Social Exclusion' summarises the policy implications of the approach it is going to promote under the heading of 'the Government's 'new' approach'.

### ***What is to be done? The Government's 'new' approach.***

SEU policy documents state that the Government's approach to solving social exclusion is framed around 'three broad goals'. These goals are:

- **preventing** social exclusion happening in the first place - by reducing risk factors and acting with those who are already at risk;
- **reintegrating** those who become excluded back into society; and delivering
- **basic minimum standards** to everyone - in health, education, in-work income, employment and tackling crime - using ambitious targets and extra resources.

(SEU, 2001, p. 31, emphasis in the original)

These goals are also repeated in each of the SEU reports that 'Preventing Social Exclusion' draws on. The range of interventions that are constructed as legitimate within these reports is extensive, and it would not be possible to summarise each here. However, in each of these reports, promoting participation in post-compulsory education and training (PCET) is cited as a policy intervention that has the potential to prevent social exclusion happening in the first place, and as a way of reintegrating those who have 'become excluded'. As such, policies

designed to encourage participation in PCET are part of the SEU's goal of 'delivering basic minimum standards to everyone'.

In the Foreword to 'Bridging the Gap: New Opportunities for 16 - 18 year olds not in education, employment or training' (SEU, 1999b), Tony Blair writes 'The best defence against social exclusion is having a job, and the best way to get a job is to have a good education, with the right training and experience' (p.9). This emphasis on paid employment as the route to inclusion, and the role of PCET in gaining paid employment, is mirrored in other SEU reports. In the SEU report on teenage pregnancy (SEU, 1999a), for example, the Government sets itself the goal of achieving 'a reduction in the risk of long term social exclusion for teenage parents and their children'. Whether this goal has been achieved or not will be 'measured using the increase in sustained participation by teenage parents in education, employment or training as a key indicator' (p. 91). Likewise, in outlining the policy priorities for tackling problems associated with 'rough sleeping' it is stated that 'services for people who have been sleeping rough need to be focused on returning them to training, employment and independent living' (SEU, 1998b, p.22).

Throughout this document, and indeed all the other reports that this document draws on, there are references to the notion of 'lifelong learning', and it is this notion that was possibly the major influence shaping policy developments within the PCET at this time.

### 2.2.2.The role of lifelong learning in delivering social inclusion

Although the origins of the term 'lifelong learning' have been traced back to the writings of educational theorists of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Jarvis, 1995) the concept, although referred to at this time as lifelong education, began to emerge as part of mainstream education policy discourse in the early 1970s, appearing in policy documents published by both UNESCO and OECD (Field, 2000).

Cropley (1980, as quoted in Tight, 1998) identifies the key features common to many conceptualisations of lifelong education. It should:

- last the life of the individual;
- lead to the systematic acquisition, renewal, upgrading and completion of knowledge, skills and attitudes, as became necessary in response to the constantly changing conditions of modern life, with the ultimate goal of promoting the self-fulfillment of each individual;
- be dependent for its successful implementation on people's increasing ability and motivation to engage in self-directed learning activities;
- acknowledge the contribution of all available educational influences including formal, non-formal and informal.

(p.2)

The concept of lifelong learning was articulated further within policies of the European Commission relating to competitiveness and economic growth (European Commission, 1994) and education policy (European Commission, 1995). In terms of educational policy in the UK, four policy reports published between 1997 and 1998 enshrined the notion of lifelong learning as central to the mainstream policy agenda (Kennedy, 1997; Dearing, 1997a and 1997b; Fryer, 1997; DfEE, 1998).

In his analysis of these four reports Tight (1998) compares the ideals articulated in earlier conceptualisations of lifelong *education* with the way in which the concept of lifelong *learning* is articulated in the policy proposals contained in the reports. He argues that whilst the reports do articulate the value of lifelong learning in broad terms, each report then moves on to put forward proposals that reflect a rather narrower version of lifelong learning. Tight discusses his concerns in relation to three issues. He is concerned that the importance of lifelong learning is too often expressed in terms of its importance for the economy and argues that this has led to there being an over-emphasis on vocational education and training. Tight states that this emphasis does not just 'downgrade the importance of other kinds of learning' but that it also denies that these other kinds of learning 'might themselves have a significant, but indirect, impact on the economy' (p483). His second concern is that whilst each of the reports sets out to address the issue of non-participation in learning, they

do so in ways that appear to blame those that are not participating for their lack of engagement rather than acknowledging the barriers that people might face. Tight's third concern is that lifelong learning appears to be articulated within the reports as being in some way 'compulsory'. Whilst accepting that policies designed to offer opportunities to all to engage in learning throughout their lives could be viewed as a positive development, Tight argues that the language used 'sounds rather like a headteacher telling off naughty school children or a drill sergeant hectoring new army recruits' (p. 484).

In summarising his analysis of the reports Tight states:

'To paraphrase, then, the prospectus on offer is more or less as follows. Lifelong learning for all is the new imperative. Its curriculum is primarily vocational in content and intent. It is our fault if we have not participated to date. We risk social and economic exclusion if we do not participate in the future. We must pay directly for our participation.' (p.484)

Despite this rather damning summary, Tight is not unenthusiastic about the potential of lifelong learning in its broadest interpretation, and this highlights what I believe is a dilemma for many practitioners working in the PCET sector. The 'vision' of lifelong learning is one that many practitioners would identify with, but at the same time the articulation of this vision in policy terms is often not quite so engaging.

Field (2000) voices similar concerns to those expressed by Tight. In the preface to his book 'Lifelong Learning and the New Educational Order', Field states that it is important for educational researchers to pay attention to policy developments in relation to lifelong learning 'because it is now a mechanism for exclusion and control. As well as empowering people, it also creates new and powerful inequalities' (p.x). At the same time he argues that it is also important to 'speak and write about lifelong learning' in order to 'retain the aspirations that it contains' (p.ix).



There are obvious similarities between Levitas's analysis of New Labour's approach to social exclusion and the critiques by Tigh and Field of the way in which the notion of lifelong learning is being articulated within social policy. In both instances there is a focus on the way in which the issues have been constructed in a very narrow way. Indeed, Tigh's summary of 'the prospectus on offer' appears to summarise nicely the combination of SID and MUD that Levitas argues frames New Labour's approach to social welfare. It is also the case, however, that there are similar emphases on the possibility of broader, alternative constructions.

### 2.2.2 Does it have to be the 'Third Way'?

Levitas traces the debates surrounding the notions of 'stakeholding' and 'communitarianism' stating that these debates are key to the way in which the discourses of SID and MUD 'fed into New Labour's rhetoric and policies', and in particular their 'pursuit of a third way beyond left and right' (p.4).

Levitas argues that inclusion is the defining value of 'stake-holding' and, as such, the way in which the notion of a 'stakeholder society'<sup>1</sup> is constructed within Government discourse has implications for the way in which policies designed to tackle social exclusion are formulated and implemented. Levitas contrasts the work of theorists who advocate a 'soft' approach to developing a stakeholding society, which she argues involves little more than promoting a change in business ethics, and those who adopt a 'harder' approach, some of which call for legislation to ensure businesses take into account the interests of other 'stake-holders'. She argues that, whilst 'hard' approaches have the potential to improve conditions for workers, both soft and hard theories of stakeholding are flawed in that they deny '...that there is any fundamental conflict of interest between owners, managers, workers and the common good' (p.87).

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<sup>1</sup> 'A stakeholder society and a stakeholder economy exist where there is a mutuality of rights and obligations constructed around the notion of economic, social and political inclusion' (Hutton, 1997, p.3)

Levitas argues New Labour's 'third way' promotes an approach in which the idea of a stakeholder society has been 'emptied of content' (p.4). She argues that although New Labour discourses articulate the notion of a stakeholder society as being an attempt to reject the negative effects of the free market, the strategy adopted by New Labour for achieving a stakeholder society seems to focus on trying to persuade the electorate that, in light of changes in the global economy, '...we are all, to quote Blair's 1996 Conference speech, on the same side and in the same team' (p.87). Similarly Clarke and Newman (1999) argue that by exploiting the discursive space between 'two failed ways', New Labour policy defines 'the impossibility of alternatives' rather than identifying 'a programmatic 'third way'" (p.5). They point in particular to the way in which the political rhetoric of New Labour appropriates the vocabulary of more radical alternatives leaving 'critics and opponents 'lost for words'" (p.7). A 'hard' approach to the notion of a stakeholder society, one that includes proposals for legislation, might be considered to be one such radical alternative.

In arguing that the notion of a stakeholder society has been 'emptied of content' Levitas is not, however, suggesting that it does not have an impact on the way in which policy is formulated. Rather she argues that to be included within New Labour's version of the stakeholder society means to be included within the world of paid work, but a world of work where the inequalities between the various stakeholders are ignored. It is this interpretation of a stakeholder society that Levitas suggests influences the way in which a social integrationist discourse is prioritised in relation to the issue of social exclusion.

Levitas explores the work of Amitai Etzioni, John Gray and John Macmurray to discuss the different interpretations of the notion of 'communitarianism', and again highlights the ambiguous interpretation of this notion in New Labour rhetoric and politics. Levitas highlights the common themes that run through the work of all of these theorists:

'All agree that social cohesion depends upon moral integration of some kind, and that this is not independent of social structure; they see economic interdependence, especially that of the market, as an insufficient basis for social solidarity, and itself

dependent on prior moral claims. All three see the self as fundamentally socially embedded, and are concerned with the relationships between freedom or autonomy and community, arguing that these are not in opposition to each other. All see community as embodying rights, responsibilities and trust – and all see actual communities as supporting solidarity through informal sanctions’

(p.110)

Levitas argues, however, that the differences between the interpretations of communitarianism are significant, and that these differences centre on the perceived relationship between the economic and the social. Levitas states that she includes the work of John Macmurray in this discussion of more recent theorising of communitarianism because Tony Blair has claimed that his own interests in communitarian themes were influenced by an interest in the work of Macmurray. Levitas argues, however, that Macmurray’s work emphasises the need for a material equality to underpin the notion of community and shared values, and as such would be closely related to RED in terms of discourses of social exclusion. Levitas suggests that such ‘a commitment to material equality is now deeply unfashionable’ (p.111) within ‘third way’ politics.

Levitas states that the moral underclass discourse of social exclusion is closest to the thesis put forward by Amitai Etzioni (1995) that is based around the idea that there has been a growing ‘moral deficit’ within society, which he attributes mainly to the breakdown of traditional family structures, and that in order to rectify this deficit it is necessary to not only promote social cohesion, but to develop processes for social control. These processes include sanctions for those who do not conform to the ‘core values’ of the community. For Etzioni, the focus of communitarianism is very much on social structures rather than economic structures.

Discussing the work of John Gray, Levitas highlights the change in his political affiliations, pointing out that ‘the Thatcherite ideologue had by 1997 become sufficiently prominent in the

intellectual circle around New Labour to be a key-note speaker at the pre-election Nexus<sup>2</sup> conference' (p.98)<sup>1</sup>. She traces this change, through references to key texts (Gray, 1989; 1993; 1995; 1997), to highlight how Gray moves from arguing for the efficacy of a laissez-faire approach to market systems to voicing concern that market forces have been allowed to 'impose on the population unprecedented levels of economic insecurity with all the resultant dislocations of life in families and communities' (1995, p.87). Gray's solution to this issue, however, focuses on mediating the effects of free markets in order to establish some level of economic security. Levitas notes that this economic security is generally articulated by Gray as resulting from engagement in paid employment. Levitas also argues that, in his writings on the issue of 'the underclass', Gray (1997) argues that welfare systems that include benefits relating to income maintenance undermine the notion of reciprocity, giving rights to those who receive them without any corresponding responsibilities. Levitas argues that it is this combination of the emphases on the role of paid employment and the notion that all rights should be 'earned' that demonstrates Gray's 'oscillation between MUD and SID' (p.111).

As with Levitas's framework of the discourses of social exclusion debates about the nature of a 'stake-holder society' and the nature of the relationship between an individual and the state are reflected in critiques of the way in which the notion of lifelong learning is constructed within social policy. The emphasis on the links between paid work and learning, or 'learning for earning' (Coffield, 1999), in educational policy initiatives has been criticised both for marginalising those who might be viewed as 'poor investments' and for focusing funding on accredited learning programmes which emphasise developing employment skills rather than any other educational goal.

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<sup>2</sup> Nexus is a 'think-tank', established in 1996 - the purpose of the think-tank was to 'develop and extend centre-left thought, and to increase the profile and quality of public debate. Both of these functions share the same aim: to strengthen the ideas and empirical evidence on which policy is based.' Tony Blair spoke at the inaugural seminar of Nexus, 'Passing the Torch'.

Mirroring the concern that the notion of a stake-holder society that has been 'emptied of content' serves only to mask the inequalities between stakeholders, Field (2000) argues that 'social exclusion tends to be a cumulative process, but the new emphasis on knowledge is a further complicating factor' (pg. 103). Field quotes from an official report which notes 'a worrying trend for the skills-rich to extend their learning and competence while the skills-poor fall further behind' (DfEE 2000, p.9) to highlight that, for some groups, the notion that they might possibly have a stake in the new 'learning society' is, at best, unrealistic. Field states that approaches to widening participation which take as their starting point an existing 'pent up' demand which is not being met, may fail to address other issues around non-participation. In particular, they may fail to address why demand does not exist within particular sections of society and what the implication of this might be for the notion of social inclusion.

Coffield (1999) argues that the way in which the individual is constructed as playing a pivotal role demonstrates that certain groups will have to work harder to earn their stake than others. Coffield quotes from the Confederation of British Industry's (CBI) publication on lifelong learning and employability, the first recommendation of which reads 'Help individuals take more responsibility for learning' (CBI, 1999, p.1), to illustrate the argument that whilst employer's organisations may well espouse the benefits of learning, they do not expect to shoulder an equal responsibility for creating the learning society. Other analysts argue that the purpose of what has been described as 'moral authoritarianism' (Ecclestone, 1998) is to 'remoralise the labour force, and to lower expectations of what can be expected as social entitlement' (Rustin, 1998, p.8).

Whilst welcoming many of the proposals in the White Paper 'Learning to Succeed: a new framework for post-16 learning', Coffield (2000) expresses his continued reservation concerning the Government's dependence on 'exhortation as a means of increasing

employers' investment in training' (p. 237). He argues that the cost of PCET provision that is explicitly directed at developing employment skills should be met more fully by industry.

Riddel et. al (2000) draw on the findings of an interview survey which mapped lifelong learning services for people with learning difficulties in Scotland to argue that the opportunities for learning, which are part of the six test criteria for a learning society (EC, 1995), are not being provided for this group of learners. They highlight that the needs of marginalised groups, groups who might be viewed as poor investments in terms of contributing to the notion of a learning society built solely around an economic rationale, are often addressed only through short-term projects with limited funding.

Both Crowther (2000) and Martin (2000) argue that lifelong learning policies should not just focus on 'learning to labour', but on learning that engages with democracy and a tradition of radical social action. Their arguments as to how lifelong learning should benefit society would resonate more clearly with Macmurray's view that 'the main function of education is to train men and women for freedom, not for work' (1931, p.25) than the other versions of communitarianism outlined by Levitas. Crowther (2000) argues for an education policy that develops learning utilising the setting of social movements: 'adult and community educators have to be *out of* the institutions and buildings and *into* the networks which link people in communities' (p.5, emphasis in the original). Martin (2000) calls for a 'reconstitution of the agora' (p.257), which would involve adopting an explicitly politicised approach to lifelong learning. The notion of the agora, which has its roots in Ancient Greek democracy, is described as a dialectical space between the private space of the household and the public world of the state. Martin argues that we need to 're-excavate this space' (p.5) in order to provide possibilities for learning which go beyond what is 'merely useful knowledge' to 'really useful knowledge' (p.3).

In tracing the debates around the notions of stakeholding and communitarianism Levitas highlights the way in which they have influenced both the politics and the policy of New

Labour and the deployment of particular discourses of social exclusion. At the same time Levitas's work highlights the possibilities of alternative discourses shaped by differing interpretations of stakeholding and communitarianism. Levitas's framework is useful in the sense that it enables an analysis that focuses on the way in which these discourses of social exclusion have emerged and been deployed in certain policy settings. However, Clarke and Newman (1999) remind us that it is important to consider the contextual and conjunctural nature of any analysis of discourses. Levitas, in explaining the nature of the research project from which this framework developed, does acknowledge the contextual and conjunctural nature of her analysis. She not only answers the question of 'why these discourses?', but also that of 'why these discourses in this place and at this time?' (Clarke and Newman, 1999, p.4). Whilst a relatively short period of time has elapsed since Levitas carried out her research it is important to recognise that circumstances have changed. New Labour has moved from opposition to government, and the SEU have attempted to put their policies 'into practice'.

Clarke and Newman also argue that it is important to focus on the changeable, contradictory and contested nature of discourses. The 'changeable' refers to the notion that the meanings carried by discourses can never be totally stabilised (Hall, 1997). Although Levitas (1998) describes the nature of RED, SID and MUD in great detail, and I have demonstrated briefly how these discourses can be viewed as influencing policy, it is important to recognise that for these discourses to be reproduced over any period of time requires 'continual cultural maintenance' (Clarke and Newman, 1999, p. 2). In an attempt to define, or perhaps to avoid defining, the notion of social exclusion the literature produced by the SEU refers to social exclusion as a 'shorthand term' for many linked social problems. Whilst it might be possible to argue that this flexibility allows for a certain degree of 'changeability', it is also the case that maintaining the 'joined-up' nature of the way in which social exclusion is constructed requires a great deal of discursive 'work'.

There is also a danger that discourses, once identified, are viewed solely as essentially unified and coherently structured formations and, as such, points of contradiction and contestation may be ignored. Clarke and Newman (1999) argue that it is important to treat discourses as 'the temporarily accomplished putting together of disparate and ill fitting elements into some sort of holding pattern' (p.12). It is from this perspective that the analyst can examine how the discursive strategies are re-deployed to take account of contradictions. As I have outlined previously, one of the key features of the SEU has been the involvement of not only a number of government departments but groups representing the voluntary sector and business interests. Whilst all of these groups might be willing to be involved in the 'joined-up' approach advocated by the SEU, it is difficult to imagine that different approaches to the problems that the SEU seeks to address would not provide sites of contestation.

Bearing these points in mind, rather than taking Levitas's framework and applying it to the issues I wish to explore, I needed to develop my own framework for analysis. In Chapter 3, when I discuss Foucauldian genealogical analysis in more detail, I will highlight the importance of not simply 'superimposing' explanatory frameworks when the aim is to 'unearth' alternative discourses that have been 'suppressed along the way' (Cain, p.93). At this point, however, I want to turn to the issue of another 'shorthand term' that of widening participation.



### **2.3 Widening participation: another 'shorthand term'.**

In the introduction to this thesis I outlined briefly some of the debates that have surrounded Government attempts to widen participation in PCET. I highlighted the argument that too often policies focus on increasing participation and achievement rather than widening participation by engaging those groups who in the past have been least likely to participate. The latest report on adult participation in post-compulsory education commissioned by the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (Aldridge and Tuckett, 2005) finds that, although there has been an increase over the previous year in the number of adults currently participating in learning, there has been very little change in patterns of participation since its initial survey in 1996:

'The survey also shows that social class, as ever, has a marked impact on participation. Professional and managerial groups (56%) are twice as likely to participate as unskilled and unwaged groups (26%).... As in previous years the age divide in participation is clearly shown, with a marked drop for people over-55 (22%)...

(p.1)

The report also notes that despite the increase in overall numbers participating, the figure still remains 4% below that reported in 1996. Other patterns in participation that have been reported in the annual surveys are:

- adults are more likely to participate if they are in paid employment than if they are not
- adults who have access to ICT are more likely to participate than those who do not
- adults who leave compulsory education as soon as possible (terminal age of education) are less likely to return to PCET than those who stay on for even a short while.

In her book 'Fixing or changing the pattern? Reflections on widening adult participation in learning' McGivney (2001) looks back at the research that she conducted in 1990, which was

published under the title 'Education's for Other People'(1990). She reflects on why 'in spite of the drive towards lifelong learning, we have ended up virtually where we started' (p.2).

### 2.3.1 Why is learning still 'for other people'?

The issues that McGivney identifies are:

- Priority in terms of funding is still given to the 16 – 18 cohort.
- No specific policies for learning provision for older people (50+) have been introduced.
- Despite an apparent recognition of the value of informal community-based learning, the primary focus is still on qualifications and educational progression.
- Too many widening participation initiatives are short-term pilot schemes, which rely on practitioners to bid for their share of limited resources.
- The apparent reluctance to introduce measures to persuade employers to contribute more to the cost of training.
- A continuing failure to draw on the lessons of the past and the expertise already available, with funds being spent on research that 'rediscovers much of what has long been known'.
- Outreach development with non-participants is still a 'marginal rather than a mainstream activity'.

I will be discussing many of these issues further in subsequent chapters, but at this point I want to highlight some examples of research that have engaged specifically with this notion of learning being 'for other people'.

Crossan et al (2000) have argued for a more subjective understanding of the processes that lead to participation or non-participation than are available through analysis of quantitative data. They argue that 'the processes and complexities which underpin the transition from non-participants to participation have to be understood in terms of structural barriers and human agency within the context of people's lives' (p.1). Their research used biographical

interviews with new learners, early entrants (people who completed a course of study in 1997), and non-participants to explore issues such as:

- ◆ the impact of earlier life experiences, including negative experiences of compulsory education;
- ◆ structural issues, including lack of childcare provision, low income and a social security benefits system which penalised certain groups; and
- ◆ factors which motivated participation, such the notion of self-development and improving employment prospects.

One of the findings of the research was that, for a significant number of the interviewees, rather than the decision to participate being a result of 'agonised decisions' (p.4), they indicated a process of 'drift'. Drift, in this instance, refers to 'a gradual process of movement, unperceived by the actor, in which the first stage may be accidental or unpredictable from the point of view of any theoretical frame of reference' (Matza, 1963, p.29). Crossan et al. outline a number of aspects of the provision of post-compulsory education and training (PCET) which they argue could be developed further in order to facilitate participation and to maximise any opportunities to engage with prospective learners. Whilst not ignoring the structural barriers, the research highlights additional factors. These factors include the importance of community-based further education provision, the role of outreach workers and the importance of encouraging, those who choose to, to adopt the identity of 'learner'.

The notion of the identity of 'learner' is also explored in research carried out by Warmington (2002). He argues that 'learning has become embedded in the promise that the cultural capital of education will convert directly into economic capital, in the form of comparatively secure, reasonably paid employment' (p.1). His ethnographic research project followed a group of mature learners from their enrolment on an 'Access to Higher Education' course, through to their transfer from further education to higher education. He asks the question 'how do these mature students who are all too familiar with education's uncertain promises renew and insure their educational projects?' He argues that his findings suggest that, whilst the learners consented to PCET's aspirational discourses, they sought to insure themselves

against the possibility that PCET would not deliver on its promises. They did this by creating discourses that both 'transcended' and were 'antagonistic to' the 'official inter-conversion discourse' of PCET. These discourses reflected ideas of personal development, and indeed transformation, through the process of learning, and of the value placed on the idea of qualifications which could not be 'taken away'. Warmington argues that these discourses of insurance can be seen in the 'inalienable qualities' that the learners attached to their projects. He states:

' the 'inalienable' quality that manifested itself most strongly was the outcome of an enriched self, fortified to an extent by broadened academic knowledge but even more so by the sense of becoming, as Nabila put it 'a somebody' rather than 'a nobody'. Anything was preferable to the dread, expressed by Mark, of being 'an unemployed I-don't-know'

(p.17).

Preece (2001) has researched how what she refers to as 'off limits curricula' can be used to engage adult learners who might be regarded, in educational terms, as socially excluded. Preece uses the term 'off limits curricula' to describe provision of learning programmes that 'provide the opportunity to move beyond subject matter that is confined by the limits of existing authoritative text' and 'emphasise the need to move outside of 'normalised' notions of knowledge' (p.206). Preece argues that programmes designed to engage socially excluded groups should be based around issues that are socially and culturally relevant to these groups. She argues that people are excluded because they do not conform to particular societal norms and that, if programmes of learning serve only to reinforce these norms, the term social exclusion becomes even more 'culturally defined, economically driven and politically motivated' (p201). Preece states that, as such, the policies are unlikely to achieve their stated aims.

Preece outlines the findings of an action research programme which she carried out in the North of England that focused on a partnership between one university and local community organisations. The partnership aimed to provide a range of educational opportunities for

groups of adults that included older adults, men in prison, young mothers, unwaged people with disabilities and young Pakistani Muslim women. The partnership sought the opinions of these groups as to what issues and interests they would like to address, employed tutors from related communities and provided training that focused on developing an interactive teaching style. Preece argues that this approach meant that many learners 'included themselves in the wider society – but on their own terms, rather than allowing external agents to include them through strategies for normalisation' (p.218). She argues that if policy is to be influenced to the stage where a less marginalising notion of social exclusion can be mobilised, then researchers need to document the evidence that change in teaching and learning practices can produce new knowledge and attitudes.

My reason for choosing to highlight these three examples is that whilst each of the projects acknowledges the more 'structural' barriers to participation, each project also seeks to identify the more complex and subtle barriers to participation that people may experience. Equally, all of the projects also highlight strategies that practitioners can adopt, and which researchers should explore further, in order to promote widening participation in learning. I would argue that a useful way of researching these strategies further is to adopt what has been referred to as a 'policy-as-discourse' approach.

### 2.3.2 Policy-as-Discourse

Bacchi (2000) explores the work of social policy analysts who adopt what she refers to as 'a policy-as-discourse' approach (p.47). Bacchi uses the distinctions outlined by Michalowski (1993) of social deconstructionist and literary deconstructionist to differentiate between different uses of the term 'discourse'. She points out that 'policy as discourse' analysts tend to favour social deconstruction rather than literary deconstruction which 'tends to see everything as text, whereas social deconstructionists emphasise the processes involved in the creation of the text' (p.46). Bacchi discusses how useful this shift in approach has been for exploring 'the non-innocence of how 'problems' get framed within policy proposals, how the frames will affect what can be thought about and how this affects the possibilities for

action' (p.30). At the same time, Bacchi argues that a great deal of theorising in this area has focused on the way discourses are put to use by those conceptualised as 'having' power and on the effects of this process on those who are considered to be 'lacking' in power. She suggests that this focus arises because many analysts who adopt the policy as discourse approach are often concerned with the notion of social policy as a form of social control and, as such, are also concerned with the constraints that social policy exercises over peoples' lives. Bacchi's contention is not that this theorising is not useful, but she voices concern that this focus means that there are areas within the process of policy making and implementation that remain under-theorised. Baachi argues that "policy as discourse" analysts need to spend more time theorising the 'spaces for challenge' (p.55).

Miller (1993) discusses the process of what he refers to as 'claims-making from the underside' (p.349). In his discussion Miller argues that there are different processes involved in making claims, including claims regarding the way in which certain issues are constructed as 'social problems'. Miller states that processes of macromanipulation can be conceptualised as the ways in which people or groups who are able, and accustomed, to making their claims directly go about constructing the 'truths' of any issue or problem. He argues that analyses that focus on these processes of macromanipulation tend to reflect approaches that conceptualise power as 'owned by elite groups and individuals' (p.353). Micromanipulation, on the other hand, can be conceptualised as the unique ways in which marginalised people or groups raise problems or attempt to influence any agenda. He argues that analysis of these processes of micromanipulation illustrates that 'power, no matter how unequally distributed, is always a negotiation' (p.369).

In Chapter 3 I will return to the notion of micromanipulation and discuss the links between this notion and Foucauldian genealogical analysis. At this point, however, I want to consider the links between processes of micromanipulation and the possibilities of 'spaces for challenge'. Looking back to the three examples of research studies highlighted in the

previous sub-section, it is possible to view each of these projects as illustrations of processes of micromanipulation. Not only do the learners involved find ways of 'making sense' of an activity that has been constructed as being 'not for them', but the researchers and practitioners involved are able to articulate an approach to widening participation that contest the more 'accepted' approaches.

## **2.4 Conclusion: 'Better Policy-making'**

Newman (2002) discusses two developments that she views as having provoked a renewed interest in the policy process - firstly, the need to analyse the 'new' approach to policy-making of the current Government and, secondly, the development of new theoretical approaches that focus on issues of power and governance. She argues that these two developments 'highlight the need to go beyond the study of the *content* of social policies to embrace the study of the *processes* through which policies are made and enacted (p.347, emphasis in the original).

In discussing the approach to policy-making by the current Government, Newman highlights the stated aim of the Government to ensure that 'policy making was approached in a more joined up and strategic way, drawing a range of stakeholders into partnership to develop a more integrated approach to complex policy problems.' (p 248) Alongside the establishment of the SEU with its cross-cutting policy agenda, the government published a series of policy papers on the 'new' approach to policy making (Cabinet Office 1999a, 1999b; Centre for Management and Policy Studies, 2001; National Audit Office, 2001). These policy papers emphasised the need for 'inclusiveness' in modern policy making. The document 'Better Policy-Making' (Centre for Management and Policy Studies (CMPS), 2001, p6.) states that an inclusive policy making process:

- Consults those responsible for service delivery/implementation
- Consults those at the receiving end or otherwise affected by the policy
- Carries out an impact assessment

- Seeks feedback on policy recipients and front line deliverers.

Alongside these recommendations, however, additional guidelines insist that modern policy making should also be based on evidence and built on systematic evaluation. In practice these guidelines can lead to systems of evaluation being built around 'a highly centralised approach based on a panoply of performance indicators, standards, targets, inspection and audit regimes' (Newman, 2002, p. 351). This approach can result in the neglect of some of the 'outcomes - desired changes in the real world' (CMPS, 2001, p. 5) that are less easily operationalised and measured.

Similarly, a tension often exists between the desire to formulate 'forward-looking' policy which takes 'a long term view' (CMPS, 2001, p.6) and the perceived necessity to deliver 'short-term outputs that satisfy its [the government's] electoral pledges on health and education' (Newman, 2002, p.351). This tension can lead to practitioners having to cope with implementing a series of initiatives which, whilst having specific rationales and designated outcomes, do not necessarily form a coherent long-term strategy.

Newman states that these 'new' approaches to policy making 'represent important shifts in the discourses and practices of government, and are having significant repercussions on the ways in which social policy problems are framed and solutions sought'(p.352). She suggests that social policy analysts need to ensure that the way in which the effects of these systems of evaluation, and particularly the attempts to measure 'value for money' and to direct funding at 'what works', are fully explored. I would add to Newman's comments that it is possible to view these developments as opportunities to explore processes of micromanipulation. Whilst acknowledging the tensions that exist within this 'new' approach to policy-making the processes of consultation and evaluation do provide opportunities for 'claims-making from the underside', and in the chapters that follow I will explore how practitioners make use of these opportunities.



Newman also warns that it is not possible to 'read' the substance of social policies from the various social policy documents, but that it is necessary to explore "the dynamics of policy process itself, set in the context of contemporary theories of governance, power and the state, is essential for those seeking to analyse and understand what is going on in social policy' (p.354). In the next chapter I will discuss the theoretical approach I will take to explore the dynamics of the policy process., but at this point I want to outline briefly my reasons for choosing to focus on the work of NIACE as a way of exploring 'what is going on'.

#### 2.4.1 NIACE and ALW

NIACE's latest annual report describes the organisations values thus:

'We believe that adult learning is essential, not only to create and maintain a more skilled and knowledgeable workforce, but also for personal development, and for building a democratic, just and informed society. We believe that people are excluded from learning because of unfair structures and policies, and we recognise the need to fight for equality of opportunity for all learners. In all our work, the key issue is 'what does this mean for the adults most marginalised from society?'

(NIACE, 2005, p.5)

The document goes on to state that NIACE's objectives include attempting 'to improve opportunities to widen access to learning, especially for adults who have benefited least from previous education and training'. These values and objectives mean that NIACE engaging in the debates surrounding widening participation is central to the organisation's mission. The make-up of NIACE's membership, and the other organisations with which it has formed partnerships, reflect the interest of the organisation in both formal and informal learning that takes place in both traditional and non-traditional settings. The organisation's interpretation of the role of learning as encompassing more than simply preparation for, and advancement

within, paid employment also means that its engagement in debates surrounding participation reflects issues of social inclusion/exclusion.

Before beginning this research project my understanding of NIACE's work had been very much from the perspective of a practitioner. Whilst I was aware that NIACE did campaign on various policy issues, my experience of the organisation had been related to their role in promoting adult learning through various initiatives. Working in the adult and community education sector, often described as 'the Cinderella sector', you are constantly aware of the need to cut costs and make best use of the resources that are made available to you by various organisations. NIACE was one such organisation that supplied free promotional materials and opportunities to bid for small-scale funding as part of its ALW initiative. When I approached NIACE in the early stages of developing this research project I did so with the aim of gaining access to any archive material that they might have relating to the ALW initiative and with the hope of interviewing members of staff who had been involved in promoting the initiative. It wasn't until I spent time looking through the archive material that I realised the extent to which NIACE was involved in research and advocacy work designed to influence the policy-making process. It was because of this dual perspective of the organisation – engaging both with the interests of practitioners and policy-makers – that I made the decision use the work of NIACE to frame my approach to data collection. This dual perspective, I believe, is what makes the organisation's work an ideal setting for following Newman's advice to explore the dynamics of the policy-making process.

## **Chapter Three: Foucauldian Genealogical Analysis**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In Chapter 2 I outlined the rationale and context for my project and detailed the issues I believe could be addressed through a project that adopts a Foucauldian genealogical approach. I have argued that by exploring the 'space for challenge' (Bacchi, 2000, p.55), we may gain a better understanding of the process of policy making and implementation. I have suggested that, in order to explore this space, a focus on the process of 'micromanipulation' (Miller, 1993, p.369) is essential in order to examine power relations at a level that recognises the detail of peoples lived experiences of social policy. I have argued that there is a danger that 'policy as discourse' analysis can focus too often on processes of 'macromanipulation' which tend to emphasise how policy is put to use by those conceptualised as 'having' power and on the effects of this process on those who are considered to be 'lacking' in power.

In Section 3.2 of this chapter I will examine in more depth the process of 'doing a genealogy', firstly by outlining Foucault's rationale for developing this approach and detailing the processes of analysis suggested by him, and secondly by relating these processes to my own research project. I will provide a general overview of the Foucauldian notions of archaeology and genealogy, placing a particular emphasis on how these two notions are linked and the role each can play in an analysis of policy formulation and implementation. I will discuss how by adopting a genealogical approach to this research project I believe I can engage with the issues outlined in Chapter 2 and summarised in the paragraphs above.

In Section 3.3 I will explore genealogical analysis in more detail. Drawing on the work of Andersen (2003), I will examine the process by which an archive is constructed, how the

statements, which are the building blocks of the discourse, are identified and how these statements can be analysed in order to establish the discursive formations to which they belong. I will then outline how a genealogical analysis of these discursive formations allows us to explore how they are shaped and transformed and how, through this analysis, possible 'spaces for challenge' can be identified. I will conclude this section by discussing how this approach to analysis relates to the research questions that this project seeks to explore.

Having discussed how genealogical analysis can inform the analysis of policy making and implementation, in Section 3.4 I will outline the implications of this approach in relation to the process of data collection and analysis. Using Foucault's notion of 'the general archive', I will consider how the genealogical approach has shaped my research project for the way in which the data was collected and analysed.

### **3.2 Foucault's Genealogy: 'the unfolding of a space in which it is once more possible to think' (Foucault, 1970, p.342).**

In developing a genealogical approach Foucault was attempting to distinguish his historical work from accounts that seek to outline an unfolding progressive narrative that would link the present to what has gone before. He argued that in looking for the origins of present day ideas by tracing them back through history we can only find continuity, which privileges certain accounts and, in effect, makes the discontinuities and ruptures disappear. Foucault is drawing on Nietzsche's (1988) criticism of 'monumental' and 'antiquarian' historiographies. Nietzsche argues that such historiographies either present a history in the form of a generalised, heterogeneous progression, the monumental historiography, or which preserve the past for the sake of the past by focusing on the 'spirit of the age', the antiquarian historiography.

In his discussion of Nietzsche's work on genealogy, Geuss (2001) compares monumental and antiquarian historiographies to the process of 'tracing a pedigree' (p.322) in the sense that the role of these historiographies 'is one of legitimizing, or at any rate of positively valorizing, some (usually contemporary) person, institution, or thing' (p.323). Tracing a pedigree requires that one singular origin is identified, which is the source of any transmitted value, and that an unbroken line of succession is established in which each step preserves or enhances that value from the original to the present object. What is being argued here is that in focusing on one single origin this process constructs histories that appear both unidimensional and inevitable. These histories undermine the ability to imagine future possibilities that do not conform to this model and this, in turn, undermines our sense of our own agency.

To relate this argument back to the purpose of this project, in 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' (1971) Foucault examines the different terms used by Nietzsche that relate to notions of origin, descent and birth in order to distinguish between 'origins in the humdrum sense of causes and sources, and a quest for Capital-O Origins as an attempt to capture the exact essence of things' (Prado, 1995, p 35). Foucault states that rather than looking for Ursprung (origin) or Abkunft (descent) we should adopt the notion of Herkunft which encompasses both origin and descent. Herkunft enables us to "identify the accidents, the minute deviations, the reversals, the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that have value for us" (Foucault, 1971, p.81).

In tracing the conjunction of a number of diverse lines, rather than trying to identify one source of origin, the focus is less likely to be on identifying any single object that carries an inherent positive value which can be transmitted down the 'line of descent'. This focus or perhaps I should say lack of focus, demands that analyses are multi-dimensional. There is also the possibility of highlighting that 'those things that have value for us' today may turn out to have an ancestry which consists of some elements which we would not value. Nietzsche's genealogy of 'Christian morals' (1969) and Foucault's genealogy of psychoanalysis (1973) provide examples of this disruption of the inevitability of the progression of an idea, phenomenon or issue. Conversely, ideas, phenomena or issues on which we do not place value could be shown to have an ancestry that contains elements that we would value.

Relating this back to the process of carrying out research, Johanneson (1998) has argued that if the primary concern of research can only be to 'overthrow' the central contradiction, whether that be related to class, gender, race or any other category, the lack of success in real terms can be debilitating. A genealogical analysis can 'displace' that central contradiction, or more specifically our preoccupation with that central contradiction, and create opportunities for new histories of processes to be explored. It is the process of exploring these new histories that provides the opportunities for identification of the 'spaces

for challenge' and for a focus on the possibilities for contestation and resistance at all levels of policy implementation.

Foucault also distinguished between Geburt (birth) and Entstehung (emergence) to illustrate that analysis should focus not only on the initial appearance of an idea or concept but also on the complex network of relationships that influence its development. The focus of a genealogical analysis is on overall change that results from the emergence of each individual element of that change at a particular time. A genealogical analysis attempts to illustrate that for change to take place it is not necessary for most or all elements of an issue, phenomenon and idea to be replaced at the same time. In this way the micromanipulations of power are not overlooked, but are highlighted to provide examples of resistance, subversion or even qualified compliance. As Noujain (1987) argues 'it makes perfect sense to claim that a social criticism generated by a genealogy is interested in micro-revolutions rather than revolution' (p.170). In highlighting all interactions, however small, with the process of social policy implementation, a genealogical analysis provides the opportunity to explore the role of individual or group agency in relation to this process.

Perhaps the most central difference between 'tracing a pedigree' and carrying out a genealogy is that the notion of the 'transmission' of value is undermined. Foucault states that any exploration of an issue, phenomenon or idea that focuses on its linear development assumes that 'words had kept their meaning, that desires still pointed in a single direction, and that ideas retained their logic' (p.139). In her discussion of genealogy Cain (1993) states that a teleological approach to tracing the history of ideas requires that 'the author's present is pre-constructed as the necessary point of arrival of the descent, as if the always immanently intended purpose of my family tree were to give birth to me' (p76). I believe that approaches to discourse analysis that emphasise a specific 'immanently intended purpose' risk ignoring other possible interpretations, resulting in a partial or limited analysis. I will return to this point again in Section 4.2 when discussing the discursive formation of

'Education for Adults' and I will illustrate how the process of 'meaning making' that underpins the normative function of social policy can be examined and opportunities for contestation and resistance identified.

Cain's image of the family tree is also useful in unpacking further what is exactly involved in adopting a genealogical approach. To illustrate, if we begin our family tree with the intention of exploring how we 'originated' then the exercise is a fairly simple task. Figure 1 presents a simple family tree that depicts all the family members that played a direct part in 'producing' me. Figure 2 presents a somewhat more complicated picture. I have added many other relatives who, whilst their existence was not essential in terms of producing me, do have some relationship to that process. This more complicated family tree can be related to the notion of *Herkunft* as, rather than tracing our 'pedigrees', it seeks to identify 'the myriad events through which - thanks to which, against which - they were formed' (Foucault, 1977, p.146).

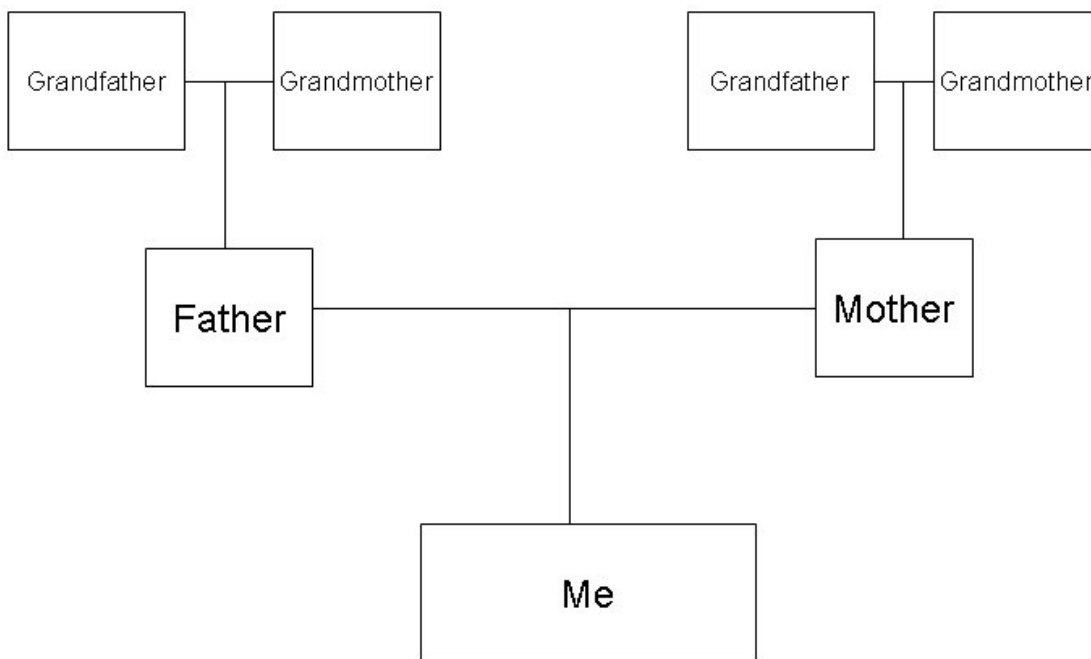
However, even with our more complicated family tree the genealogy is not complete. The next step is to turn the family tree into what is known as a genogram, a tool often used in family therapy to explore family history, relationships, traditions and feelings. It shares the family tree format, but after the family tree is completed relationship codes are placed on the lines that connect family members. In therapy the purpose of a genogram is to provide the therapist with a tool with which to identify relationships that might not be easily apparent. A genogram not only makes these relationships more obvious but may also give insights into the specific dynamics of the relationships.

To give a simple example from my family history, both my maternal grandmother and paternal grandfather died before I was born. They have an effect on my origins in a biological sense and in the relationship that they had with my parents, but no more than that. However, two people who appear only on the periphery of my more detailed family tree are the mother

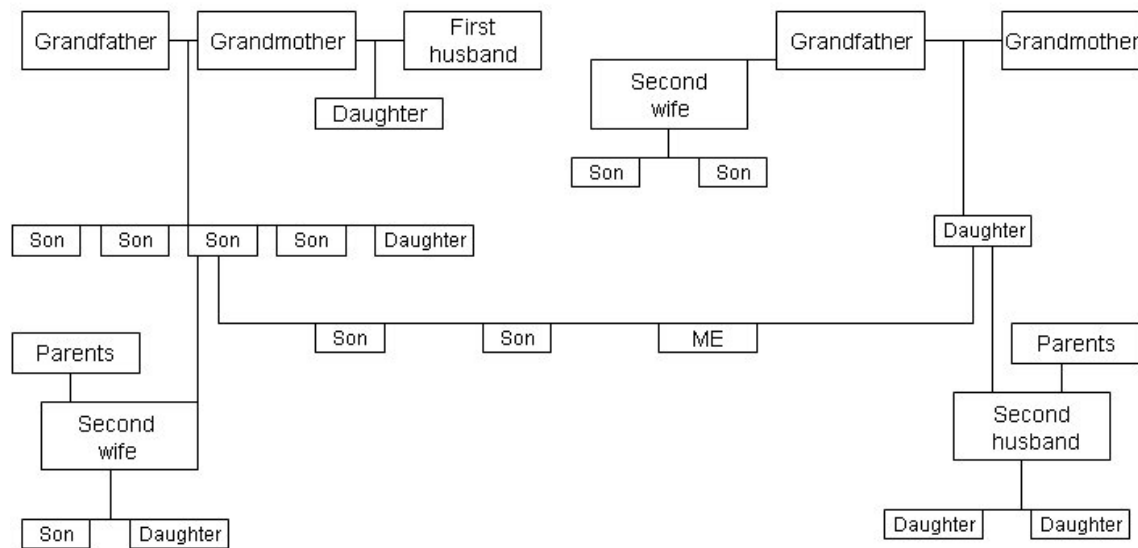


and father of my stepfather. These two people fulfilled a 'grandparent role' for me for over 20 years and I believe they have had a significant impact on my life. A family therapist would be interested in exploring all the various elements of these relationships and a genogram produced by members of the family would provide a tool with which to do this.

This genogram could be compared to the notion of *Entstehung* in the sense that relationships that are on the periphery of any linear model, and because of that are in danger of being considered marginal in terms of influence, are examined in the same detail as more obvious relationships. To use Foucault's words, these relationships then 'leap from the wings to centre stage' (p.150). Not only are these relationships brought 'centre stage' but this is done with the understanding that these relationships may be contentious and a source of disruption rather than a simple one way transmission of value.



**Figure I: Simplified family tree**



**Figure II: More complex family tree**

Possibly one of the critiques most often made of Foucault's work is that, whilst his genealogies have provided valuable insights, he does not make the detailed process of these analyses clear; he does not attempt to outline a clearly recognisable methodology. Braidotti (1991) points out that rather than trying to explore Foucault's work in an attempt to uncover a unified theory or methodology, it is more useful to think of genealogy as providing 'tools for analysis' (p.3) and it is to these tools for analysis that I now turn.

### **3.3 Genealogy as an analytical strategy**

In his book *Discursive Analytical Strategies* Andersen (2003) also argues for the use of genealogy as an 'analytical strategy'. He does not focus exclusively on genealogy, or indeed exclusively on the work of Foucault, but argues that as a result of the development of constructivism within the social sciences there is a need for a new form of questioning to be developed by researchers and theorists: a form of questioning that 'does not merely question actions within the field but which also questions the way questions are asked in the field; questions the emergence of the categories, the problems, the arguments, the themes and the interests' (p.xi). According to Andersen this involves a shift from asking 'what?' or 'why?' to asking 'how?' He makes the distinction between 'ontological over-determined theory' and 'epistemological over-determined thinking' (p.xii). His argument is that the former requires a too hasty movement towards method which, in turn, requires a 'presupposition of the object'. Andersen's argument is that this is at odds with a constructivist perspective.

This critique is similar to that of Woolgar and Pawluch (1985) who, whilst themselves writing from within a constructivist perspective, recognise that the accusation of 'ontological gerrymandering' can be made of constructionist analysis in as much as it may make the assumption that social construction processes are observable aspects of social worlds that exist separately from social constructionists' descriptions of them. Woolgar and Pawluch argue that ontological gerrymandering allows social constructionists to gloss over 'the ways in which constructionist analysts' descriptions of conditions are themselves definitional claims' (p.9). Woolgar and Pawluch suggest that social constructionists could just accept that ontological gerrymandering is a necessary part of the perspective's theorising and propose that, as long as it is presented as such, it does not detract from the observations that can be made. Other social constructionists have claimed that ontological gerrymandering cannot be overcome within traditional forms of writing and they have experimented with reflexive writing forms to remind readers that the 'authors are aware of the rhetorical devices with which they

construct textual realities and that they understand that what they offer is partisan and contestable' (Miller and Holstein, 1993, p.13).

Andersen's solution is to adopt an epistemological starting point based around analytical strategies rather than method, which could allow constructionists to work with 'an empty ontology' (p.xii). It is important to note that Andersen is not suggesting that the analyst can 'escape ontology' but that, by observing the way in which an issue, idea or phenomenon comes into being, its nature is not presupposed. More precisely, all presuppositions that are necessary in order to progress the analysis are continually questioned by ensuring that the focus of the analysis remains on first order constructs which can be sourced from the data.

Andersen suggests that the differences between method and analytical strategy can be summarised as:

METHOD	ANALYTICAL STRATEGY
Observation of an object as an object	Observations of observations as observations
The goal is to produce scientific knowledge about a given object.	The goal is to question presuppositions, to de-ontologise.
What rules and procedures are needed to produce scientific knowledge?	Which analytical strategy will enable us to obtain knowledge, critically different from the existing system of meaning?

**Table 1: Method versus analytical strategy ; Source - Andersen p.xiii)**

Andersen accepts that too often the lack of a 'unified' method can seem to suggest a study which lacks rigour and that often 'the criticism raised by more mainstream-positivist positions is well-justified' (p. xiv). However, he argues that this need not be the case and that the clear

explanation of and emphasis on the analytical strategy can be used to stress a 'deliberate choice and its implications, and to highlight that this choice could be made differently with different implications in respect of the emerging object' (p.xiii).

Before moving on to look in detail at the analytical strategies provided by a genealogical approach, I want to return again to the notion of the analyst beginning their work with an 'empty ontology', and link this notion to the concept of articulation<sup>3</sup> (Hall 1986).

Articulation in this context refers to the process through which language is assigned or produces particular meanings. It plays on the two connotations of the word: articulation as expression and articulation as a point of connection or contact between things. This double signification reflects the constructionist theory of representation, that is that meaning does not merely inhere in texts or actions—in other words, it is neither 'mimetic' or 'intentional'—but results from the place of a text or act within a specific historical context in which meaning is always contested by different groups. Hall (1986), in discussing the usefulness of the concept of articulation in relation to the role of representation, argues that:

'It (the articulation) is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time. You have to ask, under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made? The so-called 'unity' of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary 'belongingness'. The 'unity' which matters is a linkage between that articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected' (p. 53)

This consideration of the concept of articulation suggests a similar emphasis on the questions of 'how?' that Andersen argues for in his notion of an 'epistemological starting point'. Furthermore, if we relate the concept of articulation more specifically to genealogy as an

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<sup>3</sup> I draw here on the work of Stuart Hall, but I want to acknowledge that the concept of 'articulation' itself has a complex history in terms of its deployment in various theoretical frameworks: see Slack (1996)

analytical strategy, there is a resonance between the two in terms of the emphasis on historical conditions and the recognition of the possibility of 'rearticulation' or 'rupture'. To draw again on Hall's discussion of articulation: Hall uses the example of religion to explain further how questioning the inevitability of any connection or articulation is not the same as saying that the articulation is not 'anchored very directly in relation to a number of different forces' (p.54) and as such this makes the articulation difficult to disrupt. He goes on to state that in order to create the potential for disruption:

'you need to know the ideological terrain, the lay of the land..... if you are going to try to break, contest or interrupt some of these tendential historical connections, you have to know when you are moving against the grain of historical formations. If you want to move religion, to re-articulate it in another way, you are going to come across all the grooves that have articulated it already' (p.54)

In the next section I move on to discuss the detail of using genealogy as an analytical strategy and explore how this approach seeks to explore 'the lay of the land', and in turn to illuminate the potential for disruption. Within this discussion I will use the term 'articulation', with its double signification of both 'language-ing' (Hall, 1986, p.52) and connection, in order to highlight the process of representation and the importance of the role of meaning-making within the process of policy making and implementation.

### 3.3.1 Constructing the archive

As outlined earlier, the first step in any genealogical project is to carry out the process Foucault referred to as archaeology. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault (1986) identifies three concepts that underpin his archaeological analyses - statements, discourses and discursive formations. Many theorists have explored the Foucauldian interpretation of the concept of discourse, for example Hall (1992) states that discourse is 'a group of statements which provide a language for talking about - a way of representing the knowledge about - a particular topic at a particular historical moment' (p.291). What is less clear in many

accounts of Foucauldian discourse is how an analyst goes about identifying the statements which form the building blocks of the discourse. Drawing on *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Andersen states that Foucault was very precise about what constituted a statement and he argues that analysts should focus on the four required aspects of a statement i.e. their objects, subjects, conceptual networks and strategies, in order to begin to construct the archive of any project. In the next chapter I will analyse the statements which emerge in various documents and texts relating to the formulation of a specific education policy in order to provide examples of this process. At this stage I want to outline briefly what is meant by objects, subjects, conceptual networks and strategies in the context of an archaeological analysis.

### ***Objects***

Objects are not 'objects in themselves' that exist outside of the statement. The way in which the object is articulated the way in which it is classified and identified, is contained within the statement itself. To draw on an example used by Laclau and Mouffe (1990) 'a diamond in the market or at the bottom of a mine is the same physical object ...but it is only a commodity within a determinate system' (p.101).

### ***Subjects***

Subjects also do not stand outside of the statement, drawing again on Laclau and Mouffe 'the same system of rules that makes a spherical object a football, makes me a player'. However, it is important to note that the subject is produced in two different senses in the Foucauldian notion of discourse. A statement can create a subject that 'personifies' the discourse; for example Foucault (1973) explores how discourses of 'madness' create the subject of 'the madman'. However, a statement can also create a discursive space or 'subject position'. To position oneself within the discourse involves 'subjecting yourself' to the rules and categorisations of the discourse. To draw on the example of 'madness' once again, Foucault

outlines how statements surrounding the notion of 'internment' relate to the object of 'madness' and the subject of 'the madman'. In different historical periods the rationale for 'internment' has changed from an emphasis on the need for protection of the rest of society to an emphasis on the possibility of medical treatment. To intern someone with the objective of providing medical treatment requires the construction of both the object of 'madness' and the subject of 'madman' as 'treatable'. If the object and subject are both viewed as in need of treatment then, for example, the related subject position of 'psychiatrist', a doctor specialising in the treatment of mental illness, becomes meaningful. At the same time 'the psychiatrist' occupies a position from which it is possible to articulate the power and knowledge associated with the discourse of 'madness'. It is important therefore when seeking to identify the way in which statements articulate the subject to be sensitive to not only the statements that articulate the qualities and values of the subject, but to statements that seek to legitimate certain discursive spaces, or subject positions, from which it is possible to speak of the subject i.e. from which the subject is made meaningful.

### ***Conceptual network***

A statement must be situated within a conceptual network i.e. it draws on other elements of signification or associated fields either implicitly or explicitly through modifying, adapting, opposing or commenting on these other concepts. Andersen (2003) emphasises that a conceptual network should not just be analysed retrospectively in relation to other statements but projectively in the sense that it paves the way for any future statements. Hall (1997) uses the feminist movement's slogan that 'the personal is political' to illustrate this function of a conceptual network. Not only is this slogan retrospective in the sense that it uses a specific previous articulation of the object of 'political' to establish meaning but it paves the way for a new articulation of the 'political' in drawing on the object of 'the personal.'



## **Strategy**

The term strategy is a problematic one as it appears to imply a move back to questions of 'why?' to suggest that the analyst must identify a purpose for the statement. However 'strategy' in the sense that it is used in archaeological analysis does not mean that the statements are created and then put to use, but that the statement 'seeks support in a context; it appears with a status derived from the strategic context of its origin' (Andersen, 2003, p. 9). By making strategy a part of the necessary conditions for the existence of the statement the need to identify intent is removed. Andersen uses the example of books that have been adapted into screenplays and then produced as films. Whilst many of the elements of the original statements that could be found in the book may still be in place, the context from which they will draw their status is different in terms of time, place and materiality.

Referring back to Hall's discussion of the concept of discourse, if discourse is 'a group of statements which provide a language for talking about - a way of representing the knowledge about - a particular topic at a particular historical moment' (p.291) then the final identified body of statements, analysed in terms of the objects and subjects they create, the conceptual networks that they draw on and the strategies from which they draw their status, is the archive of discourse on which further analysis should be based.

The next step of the analysis is to explore the archive of discourse in order to identify discursive formations. Foucault describes the process of identifying discursive formations as examining each statement and 'determining its exact boundaries, establishing the connections to other statements to which it can be linked and showing which other categories of statements are thus excluded' (Foucault, 1970, p.156). Drawing on Foucault's discussion of the bodies of rules that he deploys within *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Andersen suggests a number of questions that can be used to inform this stage of the analysis. These are outlined in Table 2 below:

The formation of objects: are there regularities across statements in the way in which they shape their objects?	<p>What is the regularity of the dispersed formation of objects by the statements?</p> <p>According to which rules are the objects created, ordered and classified.</p> <p>Which relations (for example, cause -effect relations) are established between the discursive objects?</p> <p>Which hierarchy of objects does the object form a part of?</p> <p>How are the objects specified and characterised?</p>
The formation of subjects: are there regularities across statements in the shaping of the spaces from which the objects can be enunciated? Are there regularities across the statements in terms of the acceptance of entering certain individuals into the spaces being created?	<p>From which subject positions do the objects appear the way they do?</p> <p>Which qualities relate to the subject positions?</p> <p>In which situation can the subject position be used as a platform for speaking and observing?</p> <p>What are the rules for observation and for the formation of statements when one assumes a specific position?</p>
The formation of concepts: are there regularities across statements in the way that they make connections between concepts?	<p>How do concepts organise and connect statements?</p> <p>Are certain concepts, which would appear to have an obvious connection, omitted?</p> <p>What are the rules for conceptualisation in terms of how specific discursive formations draw on concepts from other formations?</p>
The formation of strategies: are there regularities across statements in the way in which strategies either delimit or constrain the rules of acceptability?	<p>Does the nature of the strategy allow for interdiscursivity between strategies in other statements?</p> <p>What is the nature of that interdiscursivity?</p>

**Table 2: Identifying discursive formations; Adapted from Andersen (2003) p. 14 – 16**

By asking these questions of the statements which have been identified it is possible to recognize specific discursive formations i.e. the same discourse appearing across a range of texts and a range of institutional sites at a specific historical period. These formations can then be named and their individual attributes explained. To summarise, the purpose of this

stage of the analysis, the process that is described by Foucault as an archaeology, is to identify the statements that exist within the archive of data that has been collected and then to define the observable regularities between these statements in order to identify discursive formations.

The purpose in identifying discursive formations is to establish what Foucault referred to as the 'regimes of truth':

'Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned....the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true' (1980, p.131)

These regimes of truth structure social relations, and in terms of this project the process of policy making and implementation, in the sense that it is through these regimes of truth that social issues or problems are constructed in a certain way and this in turn constructs certain policy interventions as legitimate and others as not. In this sense then these regimes of truth can be viewed as having their own internal sets of 'rules' or 'logics' that are sustained by the various elements of the discourse.

In terms of this project however the focus is not on simply tracing these 'rules' or 'logics' as they are articulated throughout a particular time-span, but to explore how these 'rules' or 'logics' have been, and furthermore could be, disrupted, disputed or contested. Whereas the focus of the archaeology is to establish the regularities within the discursive formations, to establish 'the lay of the land', the focus of the genealogy is to examine the ruptures and irregularities in order to explore 'the accidents, the minute deviations, the reversals, the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that

have value for us" (Foucault, 1971, p.81), and it is to this stage of the analysis that I now turn.

3.3.2 Moving from archaeology to genealogy

In section 2 of this chapter I outlined the rationale for exploring these ruptures and irregularities and in Figure 2 above I illustrate the point at which these ruptures and irregularities might be identified. In subsequent chapters I intend to explore specific examples of this analysis in relation to my research project. Bearing this in mind, the purpose of this subsection is to briefly illustrate the process through which a genealogical approach can present us with alternative histories, or 'counter-memories' (Bouchard, p.9).

Andersen (2003, p.21) adapts a figure produced by Noujain (1987) to provide a diagrammatic representation of the genealogy of psychoanalysis. I have reproduced this figure below:

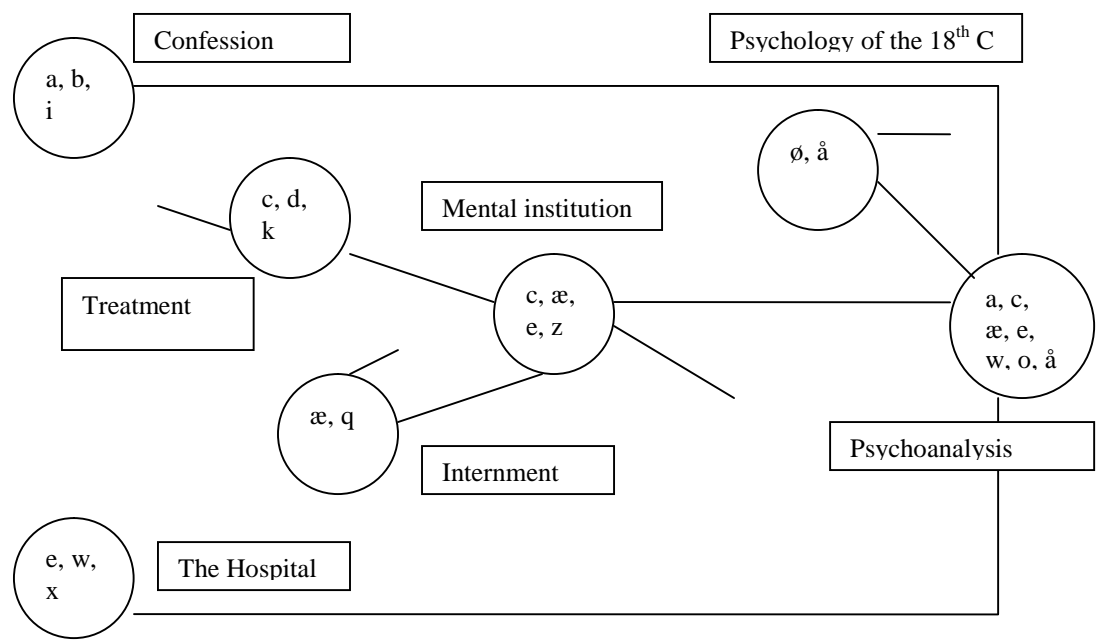


Figure III: The genealogy of psychoanalysis

Each of the letters in each circle represent the statements which form a part of the discursive formations which are named, in this instance 'confession', 'internment' etc. The lines between the formations represent relationships between the discursive formations, and for a relationship to be established one statement which was a part of the previous formation needs to be carried forward to subsequent formations.

What this diagram illustrates is that whilst it is possible to trace how elements of one discursive formation are reinscribed in subsequent discursive formations, it is also possible to ask questions about the elements of 'those constructions, strategies and practices that, for some reason, never distinguished themselves, disintegrated or changed into something else' (Andersen, 2003, p.21). It is the argument of this thesis that to recognise that certain elements of a discursive formation have failed to 'distinguish themselves', or have 'disintegrated' or have 'changed into something else' is not the same as claiming that they are irrelevant or have not had an effect on the process of policy making and implementation. Rather this recognition should prompt further exploration as to the processes surrounding this lack of visibility, disintegration or transformation. Furthermore, as already discussed in Chapter 2, the policy making environment calls increasingly on practitioners to respond more quickly to, and engage more directly with, a vast array of government initiatives. As such, it becomes increasingly important to develop models of analysis that can capture possible 'spaces for challenge' and explore them further, not only to enhance our understanding of the process in the past, but to illuminate the possibilities for the future.

At this point I want to re-state the research questions that inform this project in order to relate these questions directly to the process of genealogical analysis:

- ◆ *How is the notion of widening participation in post-compulsory learning linked to social inclusion in educational policy texts, promotional materials and practices?*
- ◆ *Who do these discourses include/exclude, and how?*

- ◆ *How do these discourses affect the practice of those involved in education policy initiatives designed to facilitate the movement from non-participation to participation?*

In Chapter 2 I outlined the context for this research project and discussed how, through the work of the Social Exclusion Unit in particular, widening participation in post-compulsory learning has become a key mechanism in government policy for tackling social exclusion. I also discussed the arguments put forward by analysts regarding the way in which these discourses work to include/exclude certain groups and the implications of this process of inclusion/exclusion. However, these discourses of widening participation and social inclusion did not arrive 'ready-made' in social policy discourse complete with uncontested meaning and constructed as sites of policy intervention with predestined associated practices.

In terms of exploring the ways in which notions of widening participation are linked to notions of social inclusion, I have already suggested that it might be the case that approaches to analysis that privilege processes of macromanipulation may have obscured the multiple ways in which these notions are constructed and the links that have, or could, be made between the two. One of the purposes of this thesis is to explore the way in which statements that articulate notions of widening participation and social inclusion are deployed and to interrogate the different relationships that are established between the two.

I have also suggested that certain approaches to 'policy as discourse' analysis have treated the outcomes of the discursive rules and logic that underpin any discourse with a certain degree of 'inevitability'. One of the purposes of this thesis is to explore the subjects and subject positions articulated within the discourse, but to do so through an analytical lens that does not assume the process of meaning-making to be uni-directional. It is my contention that 'policy as discourse' analysis should be responsive to the notion that those who the discourses of widening participation and social inclusion seek to engage may actively refuse to accept, or simply not recognise, the subjects being articulated and that this refusal or lack

of recognition means that the normative effects of policy discourses should never be taken for granted.

Furthermore, given the current policy environment, to be involved in the process of education policy making and implementation in the post-compulsory sector in whatever role, requires an engagement of some sort with the discourses of widening participation and social inclusion. However, to assume that that involvement represents some sort of 'domination' of the discourses, or rather by those who seek to deploy them, obscures the role of personal and/or group agency. In questioning how these discourses affect the practice of those involved in education policy initiatives designed to facilitate the movement from non-participation to participation my focus will not be on a 'compliance' with the normative function of these discourses, but on how these provide the impetus for the development of unique ways of engaging with the process of policy making and implementation, and of influencing any policy agenda.

Before moving on to outline the chapters in which I will present the data analysis which addresses these questions, I will consider how adopting a genealogical approach to my project has impacted on the process of data collection.

### **3.4 Discourses of widening participation and social inclusion: a genealogical project.**

Foucault (1971) describes genealogy as 'grey, meticulous and patiently documentary' (p.139) and he states that in order for genealogists to accumulate the vast amount of source material necessary for an analysis they must 'read everything, study everything.....have at one's disposal the general archive of a period at a given moment' (1998, p263). In the first three sections of this chapter I have discussed the implications in terms of data analysis of this 'grey, meticulous and patiently documentary' approach, but the notion of the 'general archive' on which the analysis is based also has a number of implications for the process of data collection.

Firstly, as it is not possible to define the discursive formations in advance of the data collection, it is also not possible to define in advance the limit of the archives in terms of what the sources of the data might be. Obviously to begin a project at all the researcher must have a starting point, but it is important to recognise that this starting point, or more accurately starting points, must provide as broad a range as possible of sources for data collection. It is also the case that during the process of data collection recurring themes within the data can lead the project in ways that could not have been predicted, and therefore it is important that possible sources of data are not dismissed as irrelevant to the project.

Secondly, given the large amount of source data that is being collected, it could be tempting to restrict the on-going process of data collection and analysis by focusing on sources of data that summarise or provide overviews rather than following up on the individual sources of data. It is this following up on individual sources that underpins the process by which the 'knowledge of detail' is acquired and the demand for 'relentless erudition' is fulfilled (Foucault, 1971, p.140).



Thirdly, it is important to not distinguish between what might be considered 'official' sources of data and those sources that might give a more individual or personal view and to not attach more credence to the official documents as if they were in some way a more concrete or valid expression of discourse. I believe this is especially the case when looking to explore the formulation and implementation of social policy. Whilst 'official' policy documents do form an important part of a genealogy, it is equally important to trace, where possible, both the data that plays a part in forming those documents and the data that illustrates how those documents impact on people's lived experiences and how policies are re-interpreted through those lived experiences.

In the following three subsections I will outline three different strands of the data collection that will illustrate how I sought to address each of the implications outlined above, and provide examples of the approach I took to compiling the 'general archive' for this project. These three strands, which I will refer to as 'the themes', 'the awards' and 'the partnerships', form the framework around which the Adult Learners' Week initiative is delivered each year. I have chosen these particular strands in order to illustrate how, even though a project may have a specific starting point, the process of genealogy can extend the data collection both in terms of breadth and depth, to compile a 'general archive'. By using the insights gained from analysis of the initial archive the process moves outside of the provisional boundaries of that starting point to encompass multiple settings and the archives associated with those settings. At the same time the process provides opportunities to gain multiple perspectives on the data and to gain access to sources of data which might not form a part of any 'official' archive.

### 3.4.1 The Themes

Since 1993, the second year that Adult Learners' Week was held, NIACE has used a number of themes to provide a focus for the events being held both on a national and local level. At a national level they provided the focus for 'national events, conferences and research work' and were designed to 'provoke discussion around certain aspects of adult learning' (NIACE,

1995, p.10). At a local level, event organisers could link their activities into these themes and could apply for funding from NIACE and other sponsors of ALW to help promote these events.

Currently there are 5 over-arching themes:

- Culture, community and citizenship;
- Equality and diversity;
- Learning and health;
- Skills for life, which include literacy, language and numeracy, ICT, financial literacy and media literacy, and;
- Learning in a global context.

Although different aspects of each of the themes have been emphasised in different years, what has remained constant is that there has been an explicit link made between the themes chosen for Adult Learners' Week and the role NIACE plays in attempting to influence policy-making, and as such the themes represent a 'snapshot' of some of the issues relating to adult learning that are on the policy agenda during that particular year. The themes are also used to highlight different sources of funding for the provision of adult learning initiatives. In this way the themes provide an overview of the way in which the government at the time is targeting funding in order to promote certain aspects of adult learning in line with its policy agenda. Below are some examples from 1994, which illustrate the way in which the themes tied in with the policy agenda of the time:

- Learning and the workplace - NIACE organised two conferences 'Open Learning and the National Targets for Education and Training', which was hosted by the Open University, and 'Adult Learning and the Workplace', which was hosted by IBM. The conferences served as a platform to support the introduction of the governments' National Targets for Education and Training, but also to highlight research that had

shown that 'well over a third of the workforce do not have access to education and training' (NIACE, 1995, p.10) and to lobby the government for policies that would address this issue. NIACE also used the conferences to publicise the launch of a collection of case studies, 'Workplace Learning' (NIACE, 1994). The purpose of the case studies is to 'make clear how the viability and significance of the workplace as a vehicle for adult learning has been underestimated, and its importance in creating in the UK a learning culture which can respond to employers' and individuals' needs' (NIACE, 1995, p.23)

- Consuming Passions: Learning for its Own Sake - the purpose of this theme was to 'reaffirm and highlight the importance of learning for fun or purely for pleasure' (NIACE, 1995, p.11). This theme reflected the concerns at the time that the funding of non-Schedule 2<sup>4</sup> provision was being undermined through its continued exclusion from the centralised systems of funding established under the Further and Higher Education Act (1992). In partnership with the Arts Council, NIACE supported a series of events around the country, the purpose of which was to highlight the value of this area of adult learning provision. NIACE also organised a seminar 'Learning for its Own Sake' at which Tim Boswell (Further and Higher Education Minister) made a speech re-affirming the government's commitment to the funding of non-Schedule 2 provision via the local authorities. NIACE press releases during this ALW quoted this commitment.
- Social Exclusion: From the Margins to the Mainstream - NIACE organised a conference which 'looked at access to education and training for socially excluded groups' (NIACE, 1995, p.13). Contributors to the conference included spokespeople for the Transport and General Workers Union; the National Council for One Parent Families; National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders; the Equal Opportunities Commission; and the Commission for Racial Equality. What all of these

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<sup>4</sup> The issue of 'Non-Schedule 2 provision' is addressed in detail in Chapter 5, but can be broadly defined as adult and community learning programmes which did not qualify for accreditation under the 1992 Act.

groups had in common was that they sought to represent the interests of groups that had been identified as at risk of social exclusion within the new European Union Programme, 'Social Exclusion' , a programme that introduced a new source of funding for certain aspects of adult learning via the European Social Fund.

These three examples from ALW 1994 provide a brief illustration of the way in which NIACE uses the ALW initiative to highlight the policy issues of the time. With access to the archives at NIACE I could collect data in relation to these various policy issues over the previous ten years. In addition to these archive materials, in the first two years of this project I observed the way in which these themes were decided on at a national level and the way in which different providers linked their events to these themes at a local level.

At the national level I carried out a series of interviews with NIACE staff and also observed meetings of the Adult Learners' Week Information Exchange Group and the Adult Learners' Week Steering Group. The membership of these two Groups is similar, but the agenda of the two fora differ. Membership comprises representatives of the Campaigns and Promotions team from NIACE and from NIACE Dysgu Cymru; a representative from the NIACE Directorate; representatives from partner organisation such as Campaign for Learning, UFI/learndirect, National Health Service University, Connexions and other Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) agencies; representatives from the DFES involved in securing ESF funding for Adult Learners' Week; representatives from National Learning and Skills Council (LSC); representatives from both the BBC and independent broadcasting organisations; and, representatives from local LSCs, individual institutions and regional Learning Partnerships. The Information Exchange Group is a forum where NIACE reports to its partnership organisations on the outcomes of the previous year's Adult Learners' Week and associated campaigns, and developments in relation to the coming Adult Learners' Week. Similarly, partnership organisations update members on how their plans for the next Adult Learners' Week are progressing and share information with regards to approaches to

promoting adult learning that they have found effective. The Steering Group meets to discuss broader issues that relate to the development of Adult Learners' Week in relation to current education policy agenda. For example, issues for discussion during 2004 included the implications of the 'hard agenda' reflected in the government's Skills Strategy for delivery of the Adult Learners' Week initiative, the results of an external review of Adult Learners' Week carried out by the Institute for Employment Studies and the possible links to be made between ALW2005 and current policy in relation to developing adult learners' 'media literacy'.

At a local level, in the first year of the project I carried out observations and interviews in a learndirect Centre, UFI/learndirect being one of the organisations working in partnership with NIACE to promote the ALW initiative, in the run up to and delivery of ALW2003. In the second year I carried out observations at the monthly meetings of a Learning Partnership as they planned for ALW2004, interviewed many of the members of the Learning Partnership and attended events run throughout the region during ALW2004. I will discuss these involvements at a local level in more detail in the subsection related to 'the Partnerships'.

Attending these meetings and events not only gave me access to documents that I could analyse as an on-going part of the archive work, but also provided me with ideas for additional sources of material relating to widening participation initiatives and government policy in this area. I could compare the issues focused on by NIACE and its partnership organisations with the broader education policy agenda of the time as represented in, for example, government documents, contributions by other organisations to government policy consultation, Parliamentary debates and newspaper articles. Interviews with practitioners also provided additional avenues to pursue in relation to collecting documents for data analysis, but had the additional benefit of providing a series of differing perspectives and insights into the data already collected.

### 3.4.2 The Awards

Another feature that has been part of Adult Learners' Week since its inception are the awards for various categories of learners. In 1992 there was one overarching category of award for 'Outstanding Adult Learners'. Alongside celebrating the achievements of these individual learners, the purpose of these awards was to highlight 'the accomplishments of some remarkable adult learners in a way that was particularly attractive to television and the press' in order to promote participation in adult learning and to show 'many non-participant adults that education and training could equally be used by them to achieve their personal and vocational goals, that learning need not stop with initial schooling and that, with determination, barriers to access may be overcome (NIACE, 1993, p.6).

By 2004 the categories of awards had grown considerably, consisting of Individual Awards, Group Awards, Senior Learner of the Year Award, 'Family Learning' Awards for both learners and providers, New Learning Opportunities Awards, 'Learning Works' Awards for both learners and providers and the NHSU Award. Reflected in these categories of awards it is possible to observe many of the developments in education policy since 1992. From archive documents it is possible to trace the development of the categories of awards and the criteria used to select winners of each award. I also had access to all of the applications for each award with statements by the nominees and nominators. Taking this one step further, I had access to the promotional material and press cuttings from each Adult Learners' Week and could analyse not only the way in which the stories of the winners were used to promote participation in adult learning on a national and local level, but the connections made between these stories and other education policy related issues in the media, NIACE advocacy documents and case studies, and responses to government policy consultation papers.

Once again, in order to gain additional insights into these data, I interviewed practitioners and award winners, carried out participant observations as a member of two panels judging

regional individual awards and national group awards and attended award ceremonies during ALW2004.

### 3.4.3 The Partnerships

One issue which arose during my initial interviews with members of the NIACE Campaigns and Promotions team was that in order to widen participation amongst different groups of learners the team felt that it was necessary to widen participation in terms of groups involved in delivering learning. Documents in the NIACE archive record how different groups have become involved in the initiative. These groups include sponsors of the initiative who provide funding for awards or promotional and 'in-kind' support, but also organisations or groups whose main activity is to deliver learning programmes, or who view learning as an integral part of their other activities. These archive documents record the differing priorities of these groups in relation to widening participation in adult learning, but at the same time they can illustrate the interaction between policy making and implementation as shifts in the policy agenda engage different groups in the process of delivering adult learning.

As with the data relating to the themes of ALW, these data provided me with different avenues to follow in order to collect further data from a wide variety of sources. At the same time, NIACE acted as gatekeepers providing me with access to a number of practitioners and settings. As I have already mentioned I carried out interviews and observations in a learndirect centre and with members of a regional Learning Partnership.

My involvement with the learndirect centre provided me not only the opportunity to interview and observe the staff as they planned for and delivered ALW, but also with the opportunity to enrol as a learner on certain learndirect courses. Having a better knowledge of the courses through my own experiences as a student provided additional insights into the way in which the practitioners in this particular setting attempted to use ALW initiative to promote their particular strand of learning provision. My role within the centre during Adult Learners' Week

was to maintain the records of participants that are required by learndirect as part of their normal audit trail for funding and evaluation, and also requested by NIACE as part of their evaluation of ALW, which they in turn use to support their case for funding from various bodies.

Likewise, my involvement with the Learning Partnership provided me with the opportunity to engage with ALW at a number of different levels. This particular Learning Partnership used Adult Learners' Week to engage with the themes and awards in order to promote different aspects of their provision, but they also used ALW to promote two large Learning Partnership promotional events which were to be held in July of that year. Being involved in this process provided me with insights into how practitioners use various initiatives to provide the publicity and funding necessary to promote adult learning, but particularly how they make use of these resources to provide for the needs they have identified within their particular region. My involvement with this Learning Partnership included, once again, maintaining records required for funding and evaluation of an event linked to 'Cultural Diversity Day', an aspect of ALW that has been developed with the intention of encouraging partnership organisations to pool their resources and deliver events that tie into one of the themes of ALW. I was also a delegate at a seminar on 'Family Learning' hosted by the Learning Partnership at which many providers gave presentations on how they linked their initiatives into sources of funding made available to promote this aspect of the current education policy agenda. As part of the planning for the linking of ALW to promotional events to be held later in the year, I observed the meetings of a sub-committee tasked with planning for these events. During these events, one held in a local family amusement park and the other in a local shopping centre, I once again helped maintain records required for funding and evaluation.

In the three subsections above I have sought to illustrate some of the ways in which the requirement for a general archive on which to base a genealogical analysis has affected the process of data collection for this project. I have discussed the ways in which I sought to



ensure that as broad a possible range of sources of data were explored and that themes that were identified during initial analyses of the data were pursued. I have outlined how, rather than relying on documents that provide overviews or summaries I have sought to draw on as many individual sources as possible. I have also discussed how, through observations and interviews, I have sought to gain access to data that goes beyond the 'official' policy documents produced by government or organisations involved in delivering widening participation initiatives.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have provided a general overview of the Foucauldian notions of archaeology and genealogy, and linked this overview with issues outlined in previous chapters. I followed this overview with a more detailed discussion of the process of 'doing a genealogy', unpacking what was involved in constructing an archive and identifying and analysing statements and discursive formations. I then orientated this discussion towards my specific research project and considered how the genealogical approach has shaped the process of data collection.

In the introduction to this chapter I re-stated my reasons for wanting to adopt a methodology for this project that would explore the 'spaces for challenge' that exist within the process of policy making and implementation and, throughout this chapter, I have argued for the usefulness of adopting a genealogical approach to a research project that has this as its aim. In section 2 of this chapter I also stated that, although in the past examples of genealogical analysis have provided valuable insights, it has not always been the case that the detail of the process of genealogical analysis has been made clear

It would be impossible, given the limitations of this format, to provide a detailed illustration of the process of the genealogical analysis of the entire archive established for this project. Bearing this in mind my solution is to abstract a specific example which can be considered in more detail in terms of relating the analysis directly to the identification of statements and discursive formations.

In Chapter 4 of this thesis I will examine in detail the proposals contained within the White Paper 'Education and Training for the 21st Century' (DFES, 1991) and the debates that surrounded these proposals. I will structure this examination within the framework of identifying statements and discursive formations - a feature that might be defined as an 'archaeological step' in the genealogical analysis. However, in concluding the chapter, I will

discuss the possible 'spaces for challenge' that I identified at this stage of the analysis in order to provide the context for the chapters of analysis that form Part Three of this thesis.

## **Chapter Four: The Discourses of 'Education for Adults' and 'Adult Education'**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The objective of this chapter is two-fold. In light of my observation that the process of 'doing a genealogy' is often not made clear, it is my intention to provide a detailed illustration of the process of a genealogical analysis. The second purpose of this chapter is to illustrate what I have argued is the particular usefulness of a genealogical analysis, that is the identification of possible sites of contestation or resistance - the 'spaces for challenge'. In order to fulfil these objectives I will abstract an example from the genealogy which has the potential to provide both a 'snapshot' of the process of a genealogical analysis, but which also provides the opportunity to present some preliminary analysis. This will help orientate the reader towards issues that are discussed in the data analysis presented in the Part Three of this thesis.

In section 4.2 I will outline the proposals contained within the White Paper in more detail and explain the relevance of the White Paper to the issues this thesis seeks to explore. I will then outline the data sources that I used for this section of the analysis and relate these data to the notion of a 'general archive'.

Section 4.3 of this chapter will explore the statements that I have identified as being articulated within the policy documents relating to the White Paper and in subsequent debates relating to these proposals. These statements form a part of two contrasting discursive formations, which I will refer to as 'education for adults' and 'adult education'. Whilst I will use the notion of the discursive formation to structure this discussion, within the subsections that refer in turn to the formation of objects, subjects, strategies and conceptual networks, I will detail the individual groups of statements identified in the initial stages of the analysis.

In section 4.4 of this chapter I will explore the implications of the rules and logic of these discursive formations in terms of the way in which notions of inclusion/exclusion and participation are articulated. The purpose here is not to relate these discursive formations directly to discourses of social inclusion and widening participation that might be identifiable in social policy at this current time and comment on the relationship between them. As already discussed in Chapter 3, to adopt this particular approach could lead to a teleological account which would privilege certain discourses. Rather, the purpose is to provide two examples of discursive formations that will provide a point of reference for exploring the processes of policy formulation and implementation in more detail. In particular, in drawing on these two discursive formations it is possible to identify the ways in which they are challenged, resisted and subverted - to explore the processes of 'micromanipulation' which I have argued are key to understanding the way in which policies are constructed and implemented. As such, in concluding this section I will discuss the possible 'spaces for challenge' that I have identified as a result of this analysis.

In the final section of this chapter I will return to the research questions that inform this project. I will use the framework for analysis outlined in Chapter 3 in order to summarise the analysis presented in this current chapter and link it to the issues that this project seeks to explore.

## **4.2 Education and Training for the 21st Century**

In 1991 the government published the White Paper 'Education and Training for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' (DES, 1991). This White Paper comprised two volumes, Volume 1 outlines Government plans to 'improve and develop the education and training system for 16 to 19 year olds' (p.2) and Volume 2 '*The Challenge to Colleges*' outlined the Government's plans for establishing a new college sector for post 16 education and training. The proposals contained in the White Paper and the subsequent legislation (Further and Higher Education Bill (England and Wales), 1992) brought about wide-ranging changes to the delivery and funding of education in all post-compulsory sectors. The actions proposed in the White Paper are summarised as:

- The Government will legislate to remove further education colleges and sixth form colleges from local authority control.
- New councils (Further Education Funding Councils (FEFCs)) with responsibilities for colleges in the new sector will be set up.
- A new system of funding for the colleges will reward expansion.

(DES, 1991, Vol. 1. p.61)

Although the White Paper carries the title '*Education and Training for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*', its stated aim was more specific: 'This White Paper contains the Government's plans to improve and develop the education and training system for 16 to 19 year olds' (Vol. 1. p.2). It is proposed that the initiatives that will achieve this aim are to:

- establish a framework of vocational qualifications that are widely recognised and used, and that are relevant to the needs of the economy;
- promote equal esteem for academic and vocational qualifications, and clearer and more accessible paths between them;

- extend the range of services offered by sixth forms and colleges, so that young people face fewer restrictions about what education or training they choose and where they take it up;
- give Training and Enterprise Councils more scope to promote employer influence in education, and mutual support between employers and education;
- stimulate more young people to train, through the offer of a training credit;
- promote links between schools and employers, to ensure that pupils gain a good understanding of the world of work before they leave school;
- ensure that all young people get better information and guidance about the choices available to them at 16 and as they progress through further education and training;
- provide opportunities and incentives for young people to reach higher levels of attainment;
- give colleges more freedom to expand their provision and respond more flexibly to the demands of their customers.

(DES, 1991, Vol. 1. p.3)

Whilst the Bill had wide implications for all post compulsory sectors, the focus for this Chapter of my thesis are the proposals within the White Paper that applied specifically to education provision for adults. It was the details of these proposals that provoked the launch of a campaign by a group of educational organisations and institutions, representing interests at both a national and local level, the purpose of which was to lobby Members of both Houses of Parliament in an attempt to bring about changes to the proposed Bill.

In Volume 2 of the White Paper there is one section of six paragraphs devoted to 'Education for Adults'. Within this section two different objects, two categories of provision, are created and classified. These are:

- 'Education for adults' the objective of which is to 'help them (adults) improve their qualifications, update their skills and seek advancement in their current career or in a new career' ;and,
- 'Courses for the leisure interests of adults'.

(DES, 1991, Vol.2, p. 8-9)

The White Paper is specific with regards to the types of education that will be included in 'education for adults', and there are strong links between these and the provision that it is proposed will meet the overall aims of the White Paper. There is a similar emphasis on vocational qualifications and progression to higher education. With the exception of provision specifically for adults with special educational needs, all other types of education for adults that are to be included in 'education for adults', and which will fall under the remit of the new FEFCs, are 'compensatory' i.e. they provide solutions to previous failures in compulsory education. It was this distinction between the 'education for adults' and 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' and the implications of separating the two which formed the basis for many of the objections to the proposals contained within the White Paper.

The original proposals in the White Paper were subject to amendment as the Bill passed through the legislative procedures of both Houses of Parliament. The Bill finally achieved statute on 4th March 1992, the week before the first Adult Learners' Week initiative was held, and only after the Government employed a 'guillotine motion' limiting the final Committee Stage to five days and the Report and Third Reading to a single day. Commenting on this campaign Alan Tuckett, Director of NIACE , states that it achieved 'something of a linguistic shift' claiming that 'whereas people talked about flower-arranging on the rates.....within three months you found the Lords saying "'we know that flower arranging can lead to floristry'. (Interview, 15th Jan. 2004)



In the sense that many of the issues that were raised by organisations and groups lobbying Members of both Houses of Parliament were taken up in the committee stages and during debates, that campaign could be considered successful. These debates attracted considerable attention in the media, as did the campaign as a whole. The Government was forced to make some changes to the legislation and to provide clarification of other issues in both Parliamentary debates and press conferences, and some of these will be discussed in more detail in section 3 of this chapter. However, the Government did manage to get the Bill through the legislative process with most of the major proposals intact, and the Bill did lead to a restructuring of the post-compulsory education sector more or less along the lines of the original White Paper proposals.

It could be argued that this particular example of the policy making process illustrates that, even when there is considerable opposition to particular proposals and this opposition is articulated successfully, unequal relationships of power will inevitably lead to certain policy discourses prevailing. This might support an approach to the analysis of the discourses of policy making that would focus on the way in which material practices determine the efficacy of discursive practices. However, it is the contention of this thesis that the analysis of social policy formulation and implementation that focuses solely on the progress of dominant discourses can result in a partial or limited analysis which obscures much of what is achieved through processes of micro-manipulation, while an exploration of these processes will result in a more cogent analysis of the way in which social policy is formulated and implemented. To give an example, the 'linguistic shift' identified by Alan Tuckett obviously represents an outcome of this process that he valued personally and, as he spoke of this outcome in relation to the work carried out by NIACE, it would seem plausible to assume that this outcome had value in terms of that work. The central argument of this thesis is that it would be fruitful to explore the processes behind this perceived 'linguistic shift', and that genealogical analysis is a useful approach to take to this exploration. With this in mind, in the subsections that follow I will focus not only on discussing the results of my analysis in terms

of the discourses that I identify, but I will also consider how a genealogical approach provides distinctive insights on these data which might otherwise have been left unexplored

Before I move on to explore these statements and discursive formations I will outline briefly the sources of data I have used for this section of the analysis and relate these data back to the notion of a 'general archive' as outlined in Chapter 4. The data I will use for this analysis consists mainly of documents stored in the NIACE archives, but I supplemented these sources with additional data where I felt that the archive may have been too restricted. For example, although I had access to newspaper articles which had been collected by a cuttings agency on behalf of NIACE, I also accessed newspaper archives directly to examine reports published during the campaign. Likewise, annotated copies of Hansard reports of certain debates within both Houses of Parliament also formed part of the data that was available within the NIACE archive. In addition to these archived data I accessed the full records of all Hansard reports relating to debates on adult education during this period. Other data within the NIACE archive included:

- The NIACE official response to the White Paper
- Collected reactions to the NIACE response
- *Adult Learners and the Bill 1991* - a NIACE development paper
- *Learning and 'Leisure'* - a report of the main findings and policy implications of a survey of the adult population's participation in learning, written by Naomi Sargent (Project Director) and published in 1991.
- *Opening Colleges to Adult Learners* - a report of the main findings and policy implications of research project on how colleges could better serve the needs of adult learners, written by Veronica McGivney (Project Co-ordinator) and published in 1991.
- *Adult Education in Jeopardy* - a report on the Labour Party survey on the implications for adult education of the Government's White Paper, written by Labour's Shadow Education Team.

- Labour Party Press releases.
- Correspondence between NIACE and Members of Parliament (including the Secretary of State and Minister of State for Education) and civil servants in the Department of Education.
- Copies of Speeches made by Secretary of State for Education.

There were also instances within these data where other legislation, policy documents and issues were referred to and I followed up on these additional sources. The process of carrying out this data collection and analysis was not done in isolation, as it were, from other areas of data collection. I was also conducting interviews and observations which provided the opportunity to gain additional insights into the archive data. In terms of the project as a whole these data only represent a small section of the general archive. However, bearing in mind the purpose of this chapter I believe that these data provide a 'snapshot' of the way in which the process of data collection should address Foucault's stipulation that a general archive needs to extend beyond the immediately relevant setting, incorporate data that provides a variety of interpretations -rather than focusing on 'canonised works' - and facilitate the necessary attention to detail.

### **4.3. Reforming 'education for adults'**

In this section I will explore the discursive formation that I identified during my analysis of the proposals contained within the White Paper, and which I refer to as 'education for adults'. This section will comprise four subsections which will explore each element of the discursive formation - conceptual networks, objects, subjects/subject positions, and strategies - separately.

In Chapter 3 of this thesis I discussed the analysis of discursive formations and the role of the conceptual network in organising and connecting the statements which articulate the discourse. I outlined how the analysis of conceptual networks can provide the key point of regularity between statements so that a number of statements articulating individual objects and subjects can be regarded as part of the same discursive formation. In subsection 4.3.1, in order to illustrate the key role played by conceptual networks, I will explore the conceptual network of 'reform' that is drawn on by statements that articulate the discourses of 'education for adults'. In order to illustrate how this conceptual network links into other developments in social policy I will explore recent changes that had taken place in the system of social welfare, which drew on neo-liberal discourses regarding the roles of, and relationship between, the state, the markets and the individual. I will then contrast this conceptual network with that of 'adult education' in order to illustrate how, by drawing on a different model of the role and purpose of social welfare, an alternative discursive formation can be articulated.

In Chapter 3 I also discussed how conceptual networks should be analysed not only retrospectively, in the sense that they draw on previous articulations, but projectively, in the sense that they pave the way for new articulations. In order to illustrate this aspect of the conceptual network I will begin my examination of the different objects articulated by the statements identified in the White Paper by considering how they relate to the conceptual network of reform. In order to illustrate this as clearly as possible I will begin this subsection

by outlining how 'reform' can be considered both as a conceptual network and an object and how this in turn relates to the articulation of two other objects 'education for adults' and 'courses for the leisure interests of adults'. I will consider the way in which these objects are created, ordered and classified and how this affects not only the construction of what they are, but what they are not, and I will go on to explain the relevance of this aspect in terms of presenting opportunities for subversion and resistance. Drawing again on the discursive formation of adult education I will explore how the articulation of the objects of 'education for adults' and 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' can be challenged.

In subsection 4.3.3 I will turn my attention to the subjects and subject positions articulated within the statements that constitute this discursive formation. Relating this back to Chapter 3, there I discussed how the subject is produced in two different senses in the Foucauldian notion of discourse: a statement can create a subject that 'personifies' the discourse, but a statement can also create a discursive space or 'subject position'. I stated that it is important when seeking to identify the way in which statements articulate the subject to be sensitive to not only the statements that articulate the qualities and values of the subject, but to statements that seek to legitimate certain discursive spaces, or subject positions, from which it is possible to speak of the subject i.e. from which the subject is made meaningful. In this subsection I will explore the subjects of 'learner as worker' and 'learner as responsible and aspirational citizen', but I will also outline the rules and logic that constitute the boundaries of the spaces from which these subjects are made meaningful. I will consider how the acceptance of this process of 'meaning making' is necessary for the normative functions of any discourse to be effective and how, as such, the outcome of the process cannot be guaranteed. I will use the examples of the subjects/subject positions articulated by the discursive formation of 'adult education' in order to illustrate how this process of 'meaning making' can be disrupted.

In subsection 4.3.4 I will turn my attention to the strategic contexts in which the discursive formation of 'education for adults' is both constructed and then rearticulated. The structure of this subsection will be slightly different from the previous three in that rather than outlining the relevant strategic contexts of one set of discourses and then contrasting these with the other, I want to emphasise the notion of articulation as an on-going process. I also want to draw attention to the micromanipulations that take place within this process in order to illustrate that even small changes that are brought about during the process of policymaking and implementation can have a major impact on subsequent policy processes in that environment. In order to illustrate this I will begin this subsection by examining the strategic context of the White Paper itself and then go on to explore how the status of the strategic context influences future statements made in relation to the proposals contained in the White Paper by both Government Ministers and groups campaigning to revise these proposals.

#### 4.3.1 'Reform' as a conceptual network

Both the introduction and the conclusion sections of the White Paper contextualise the reforms in terms of changes in international economy. Thrift (1988) describes these changes as being a result of 'capital becoming footloose in both space and time' (p 8) in the sense that governments increasingly spoke of economic change as being the result of international economic forces and these, whilst not being beyond the control of national governments, could only be managed rather than reversed. This construction of the relationship between societal and political change as being driven by economic imperatives of 'the market' that governments cannot, and what is more should not, regulate is articulated within what has been referred to as a 'neo-liberalist discourse'. At the centre of this discourse is the core idea that it is through the operations of a 'free market', and the individual's relationship with that market, that a society can guarantee prosperity, security and opportunity for all its citizens.

The neo-liberal agenda gained support, in both popular and political terms, in the UK during the political and economic crises of the late 1970s against the background of a growing

disillusionment with the 'post-war consensus' which was failing to deliver the economic, social and political stability that had been promised<sup>5</sup>. Table 3 below provides an overview of two models of the State's involvement in economic, political and social terms in relation to the provision of welfare services - the Keynesian Welfare National State (KWNS) and the Schumpeterian Workfare Post-national Regime (SWPR). Jessop (2000), whilst accepting that these models may represent over-simplifications of a very complex process, argues that they are useful in terms of exploring the 'the relation between changes in social and economic policy; how the territorial scale on which social policies are designed and implemented has changed in line with the rescaling of the economic and political systems; and the changing balance between market, state and civil society in social policy delivery' (p.171). Drawing on these models I will explore how these wider changes in the social policy environment provide a conceptual network that connects the proposals in the White Paper to other reforms in social policy. This discussion will focus on two themes that link to the processes outlined in the table below, namely, the transition to a more 'open' economic system organised over a global scale and characterised by a demand for innovation, flexibility and competitiveness and the development of a system for the delivery of social welfare based around a commitment to 'managerial efficiency' created through a more 'business-like' ethos and greater centralisation of planning and budgetary systems. I will outline, in broad terms, how these themes are reflected in the White Paper and how each of these themes will be expanded on in the subsequent discussions concerning the formations of objects and subjects/subject positions.

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<sup>5</sup> For an overview of these developments from a political perspective see Johnson, 1989, and from an economic perspective see Leys, 1989

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>KWNS</b>		<b>SWPR</b>	
<b>State's role in securing conditions for profitable private business.</b>	Keynesian	Aims to secure 'full employment'. Model: relatively closed national economy and primarily through demand-side management.	Schumpeterian	Promoting innovation and competitiveness. Model: relatively open economy and primarily through supply-side economics.
<b>State's role in reproducing labour power individually and collectively.</b>	Welfare	Generalised norms of mass production/consumption to stimulate national economic growth. Welfare Rights: 'social wage' gained via male adult worker earning a family wage.	Workfare	Subordinates social policy to demands of the labour market for flexibility and economic competitiveness. Puts downward pressure on the 'social wage' and in doing so attacks welfare rights.
<b>The primary scale on which economic and social policies are decided</b>	National	Relative primacy of national scale: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National territorial state responsible for developing and guiding Keynesian Welfare policies.</li> <li>• Local and regional states act as relays for policies framed at national level.</li> <li>• International regimes established after WW2 were intended to restore stability to national economies and states.</li> </ul>	Post-national	Relativisation of scale - significance of national territorial state is decreased.
<b>The primary mechanism for supplementing market forces</b>	State	Market and state form mixed economy. State corrects market failures.	Regime	Increased role of governance mechanisms (non-state delivery mechanisms) to correct market and state failures.

**Table 3: Comparison of KWNS and SWPR; (Adapted from Jessop, 2000, Tables 11.1 and 11.2 and p 172 - 175)**



- *An 'open' economic system organised over a global scale and characterised by a demand for innovation, flexibility and competitiveness*

In Volume 1 of the White Paper the rationale for the proposals relating to 'education and training for the 21st century' reflect the notion that 'new skills' are required and that these skills should meet the demands of the international economy. It is claimed that the initiatives have been developed in 'response to the rising demand of employers for more and higher level skills to meet the growing challenge from overseas competitors in world markets' (p.2) and that these initiatives will result in 'the skilled and motivated workforce we need to take on the international competition, and beat it' (Foreword). Furthermore it is stated that these initiatives are needed in order to 'offer the prospect of a workforce with first class skills to produce the wealth on which our society depends for its standard of living' (p.64).

The stated aims of the White Paper (p.2), which are outlined in Section 5.2, propose the framework for the development of these 'more and higher level skills'. This framework focuses heavily on promoting 'vocational' education through the development of a 'framework of vocational qualifications that are widely recognised and used, and that are relevant to the needs of the economy' and by promoting 'equal esteem for academic and vocational qualifications'. Furthermore, in the section of the White Paper that deals specifically with initiatives for education for 'adults' rather than 'young people', there is a focus on the need for skills to be 'updated' to assist with career advancement and gaining new jobs.

Throughout the White Paper there is an emphasis on the value of the role of the employers' input into designing the curricula for the 'modern qualifications' (p.19) that will be provided within the new post-compulsory sector. The proposals in the White Paper make it clear that these initiatives will 'promote employer influence in education, and mutual support between employers and education' (p3).

Drawing on the SWPR model we can relate the White Paper proposals to broader changes in the social policy environment. The rationale for the proposals is framed in terms of a necessary response to the demands of an open economic system which is organised over a global scale. This prioritising of an economic rationale for reform of post-compulsory education results in the privileging of the needs of employers demonstrated by the focus on 'vocational' education. Furthermore the need to 'update' skills, and for these skills to be appropriate for 'the 21st century economy', reflects the demand for flexibility and innovation. The rationale for the White Paper proposals also reflect an acceptance that it is no longer the government's role to correct or manage the demands of the economic system. The role of government is to respond to these demands, and the nature of this response legitimates the particular reforms proposed in this White Paper.

- *The development of a system for the delivery of social welfare based around a commitment to 'managerial efficiency' created through a more 'business-like' ethos and greater centralisation of planning and budgetary systems.*

Not only will employers' influence on the type of education that is funded by central government be increased, but employers will also play a greater role in the governance of the post-compulsory sector. Employers' organisations will have increased representation on both the governing bodies of the newly independent colleges and the national and local FEFCs. The FEFCs main responsibilities, and as such areas over which employers' organisations will have influence, are 'the allocation of resources'; 'the quality of the education and training they fund'; and 'advising the Secretaries of State on the organisation and re-organisation of colleges' (Vol. 2, p.13).

In the White Paper the rationale that is put forward for increasing the level of representation on the governing bodies of the newly independent colleges is framed around the success of

previous employer involvement. It is stated that as a result of this involvement 'further education is now: much more responsive to individual and employer needs; marketing itself more effectively; devising courses to meet employer needs; serving the customer better by offering more flexibility in the method of delivery' (Vol. 1, p.13). The success of this previous involvement is to be built on by devolving the responsibility for the provision of work related further education, and the funding that accompanies this responsibility, from local education authorities to Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs).

The White Paper proposals not only remove the LEA's role as provider of 'education for adults' but they also limit local government representation on the governing bodies of the new institutions (DES, 1991, Vol. 2, p.21). Where the LEA does still have a role, for example in the provision of careers advice, the White Paper states that the Government proposes to take reserve powers to require LEAs to put the provision of these services out to tender in order to be 'consistent with the Government's wider policy of contracting out more local government services' (p. 42).

Referring back again to the SWPR model we can relate these reforms not only to the prioritising of an economic rationale for the types of educational provision to be funded but also the way in which this provision should be delivered. The conceptual network that justifies the increased role of non-state delivery mechanisms is based around the articulation of state provision as essentially flawed. Where the state is seen as cumbersome and bureaucratic, the market is dynamic and responsive; where the state is seen as monolithic and monopolistic, the market features competition between multiple providers; where the state is seen to be dominated by bureaucratic and professional interests in defining need and how it is met, the market is customer centred and values choice.

As discussed in section 3.3, all statements draw on conceptual networks i.e. they draw on other elements of signification or associated fields either implicitly or explicitly through modifying, adapting, opposing or commenting on these other concepts. When viewed at the level of a discursive formation, the conceptual network could be regarded as the sets of 'rules' that organise and connect statements in the sense that there are regularities in the articulations of the concepts. In turn, these 'rules' also structure the articulation of the objects and subjects of the discourse in a certain way.

If it is accepted that the economic system is structured along certain lines, and that this creates demands that the government is required to respond to in a certain way, then the articulation of the object of 'education for adults' in terms of what types of educational provision are to be prioritised in the reformed post-compulsory sector becomes 'meaningful'. These same rules construct a 'logic' that makes certain other types of educational provision 'meaningless' in this particular context. Similarly, if it is accepted that the delivery of post-compulsory education needs to become more 'business-like' and that this can be brought about by a shift of responsibilities from local government, in the form of LEAs, to systems of governance based around, at least in part, greater involvement of organisations representing employers' interests, then certain subject positions are legitimated. As already discussed in section 3.3 subject positions represent the discursive spaces from which it is possible to speak and observe, and as such they articulate certain types of knowledge as legitimate and those who occupy those discursive spaces as 'the experts' who are able to 'claim to know' about issue or problem, and how it should be dealt with. In this sense then 'Knowledge linked with power not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to *make itself true*' (Hall, 1997, p.49, emphasis in the original).

What is important in terms of this project however is that this conceptual network and the articulations of objects and subjects, which are structured by the rules and logic of this

conceptual network, can be contested. In the final part of this subsection I will outline two strands of a conceptual network that does contest the purpose and outcomes of the post-compulsory education system as articulated within the White Paper and, as a result, the subject positions that are articulated as legitimate spaces from which it is possible to speak and observe. This conceptual network forms part of the discursive formation of 'adult education' and it is articulated within the responses to the White Paper by those objecting to the proposals and who took part in the campaign to bring about changes to the proposed legislation. These two strands focus on the way in which the purpose and outcomes of the post-compulsory education system are articulated and the effect this has on which subject positions are articulated as legitimate in terms of their claims to 'expertise'.

#### **Adult Education**

- Post-compulsory education has a value which is not only related to work but to other societal activities.

This conceptual network draws on the notion of post-compulsory education as representing a 'philosophy' that is linked strongly to past history of education policy. In contrast to the '21<sup>st</sup> century skills' emphasis of the White Paper the conceptual network that the discourses of 'adult education' draws on evokes events in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and whereas the White Paper talks of economic needs being met, this network talks of the 'educational, recreational and cultural needs of our population' (Fullick, 1991, p.403).

The quote from Fullick draws, albeit selectively, on reforms brought about by the 1944 Education Act<sup>6</sup>. Fullick refers to the Act in her journal article and further references are

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<sup>6</sup> <sup>6</sup> In the 1944 Act the phrase used was 'spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community'. This was changed in subsequent legislation to 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural'.

made to this Act in responses to the White Paper (NIACE, 1991). The particular significance of this Act is not only that it brought about changes within the provision of education, but that it formed a part of the legislation which is associated with the post-war settlement and the creation of a system for the delivery of social policy based broadly around a KWNS model.

At a press launch of the survey of the implications of the White Paper carried out by the Labour Party (Campaigns and Communications Directorate, 1991), the Shadow Education Team quote from Winston Churchill (1953), 'There is, perhaps, no branch of our vast educational system which should more attract within its particular sphere the aid and encouragement of the State than adult education'. This quote is extracted from a larger passage of text which continues:

How many there must be in Britain, after the disturbance of two destructive wars, who thirst in later life to learn about the humanities, the history of their country, the philosophies of the human race, and the arts and letters which sustain and are borne forward by the ever conquering English language? This ranks in my opinion far above science and technical instruction, which are well sustained and not without their rewards in our present system....The appetite of adults to be shown the foundations and processes of thought will never be denied by a British Administration cherishing the continuity of our Island life.

Examples of the purpose of adult education and what is held to be under threat by the Government's proposals also draw on the notion of the post war settlement. In a speech to a conference organised by the Education Centres Association, Konrad Elsdon (Professor of Adult Education at Nottingham University and formerly an official in the DES and HM Staff Inspector of adult education) claimed that the level of political literacy among Britain's adult population was lower than it had been and that the proposals in the White Paper would ensure 'that we lose the political skills the nation needs if democracy

itself is to survive' (Elsdon, 1991 quoted in *Education*, 6th September, 1991, p.81). Fullick (1991) when discussing the proposed changes in funding for 'leisure classes' poses the question 'are the so called 'leisure courses' and old age pensioners now going to be turfed out into the cold for the LEA to pick up as best it can?' (p.403). In its response to the proposals in the White Paper the Voluntary Adult Education Forum argues that 'contact and affinity through an adult education class can alleviate stress and reduce loneliness which is not only of obvious benefit to the individual but must be seen also to benefit the whole community' (NIACE, 1991). Tony Uden (1991) (Associate Director, NIACE) in summarising continuing objections to the proposals in the White Paper on behalf of NIACE, the Worker's Education Association (WEA), the National Association of Teachers in Higher and Further Education (NATFHE), the Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA) and the Association of County Councils (ACC) states that 'there are aspects of citizenship, education for family life, health education, development of cultural interests which are, in our view, as vital to a thriving democratic society as those on the list (of priorities for funding in the White Paper)'.

This conceptual network not only refers back to the past associations of adult education, but paves the way for future statements in opposition to the proposals in the White Paper. In particular by linking the White Paper's categorisation of 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' to 'adult education' it provides space for demands that such courses should not be treated within the White Paper as 'a leisurely afterthought' (Editorial, *Education*, 1991, p.241).

Whilst the conceptual network that is drawn on to legitimate the proposals in the White Paper articulates post-compulsory education as needing to respond to changes in the world 'outside of' education, this conceptual network articulates education as having a role in shaping that social world and social relations within it. In contrast to the conceptual

network of reform, it does not articulate the purpose of post-compulsory education as responding to demands of a market that are somehow beyond the control of the government, but rather it articulates its purpose as being integral to the system of social welfare as a whole and as such it should attract 'the aid and encouragement of the State'.

- Proposed reforms will have the effect of breaking up or by-passing networks of expertise with regards to the provision of post-compulsory education.

If, through drawing on an alternative conceptual network, the purpose of post-compulsory education is extended beyond meeting the needs of the market and the government's role is articulated as being more than ensuring that the system meets those needs, then the conceptual network also creates alternative discursive spaces from which it is possible to speak and observe, different areas of expertise and knowledge are legitimated.

In contrast to a conceptual network that articulates local government as cumbersome and overly bureaucratic, this conceptual network attempts to establish its legitimacy and expertise by references to local accountability in terms of the electorate. The point is also made that 'anxiety about the White Paper is not confined to Labour controlled authorities' (Fatchett and Smith, 1991, p.4).

Rather than articulating 'professional' interests in defining need and how it is met as acting against the best interests of 'customer', this conceptual network articulates professionals as 'experts' who, precisely because of their previous involvement in the provision of post-compulsory education, understand the implications of the White Paper and believe that the best interests of the learner or 'customer' are 'in jeopardy' (Fatchett and Smith, 1991) or 'under threat' (Byers, 1991).



This notion of 'professionals as experts' is augmented by the support of organisations that, whilst having a national structure, draw on links with local communities to provide legitimacy for their statements. The General Synod of the Church of England 'expresses the viewpoint of Christian People involved in education' (Board of Education, General Synod, 1991) and the National Federation of Women's Institutes are reported as having 'called for their bow of burning gold and chariots of fire to put the fear of God into shire county Members of Parliament' (Editorial, Education, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1991, p.182). Most importantly, whereas the conceptual network drawn on in the White Paper privileges the needs of 'the economy', and therefore articulates employers' organisations as those best able to speak and observe, this conceptual network privileges the needs of 'the local community', and constructs those who have a direct involvement in those communities as having the expertise to serve them best.

In my discussion of the role of the conceptual network (section 3.3.1.) I highlighted the point that conceptual networks should be analysed not only retrospectively but projectively in the sense that they pave the way for future statements. In the next subsection I will begin my discussion of the objects articulated within the discursive formation of 'education for adults' by considering 'reform' as an object and how this particular object draws on the conceptual network of reform and how, in turn, this contextualises the objects of 'education for adults' and 'courses for the leisure interests of adults'.

#### 4.3.2 Reform as an object

The statements in which 'reform' is articulated within the White Paper can be viewed as forming three related categories: reform as having been 'successful' in other education sectors in the past; reform as being 'necessary' in light of economic changes on a global

scale and inefficiency in provision on a local scale; and, reform as having the purpose of 'providing opportunity'. To relate this again to the notion of reform as both an object and a conceptual network: individual statements articulate reform as *either* successful, necessary or as providing opportunity, but these statements in turn draw on the conceptual network of reform, outlined in the previous subsection, in order to establish meaning.

### ***Reform as successful***

Throughout the White Paper previous reforms in education are referred to as having been 'successful' in terms of the criteria created by the policy aims of the Government, and these successful reforms are used to legitimate the reforms proposed in this White Paper.

In the foreword to the White Paper the then Prime Minister, John Major, states

'over the last decade, there has been a revolution in Britain's education and training. The Government have introduced far reaching reforms and backed them with increased resources. As a result, parents and children now have choices and opportunities that simply did not exist before'. (DES, Vol. 1).

Chapter 2 of the White Paper outlines the achievements to date of these reforms in terms that relate to the new proposals of this White Paper. The final section of this chapter 'Finishing the Task' summarises these achievements, stating 'the opportunity now exists to build on past achievements' (p. 13).

The reforms have brought about a 'stronger education base' built around the National Curriculum ensuring standardisation within subject areas and the measurement of achievement. These reforms have also helped equip people 'for the demands of working life' with a focus on 'vocational' education and training. There has been 'a revolution in learning'

which includes action plans against which people can 'measure their achievement against standards' and keep 'their own record of achievement'. An 'open market in education and training' has been introduced and the level of 'employer involvement' has been increased (DES, Vol. 1, p. 8 - 13). These past achievements need to be carried forward into the post-compulsory education sector in order to remedy 'any deficiencies that remain' (p.2).

### ***Reform as necessary***

The articulation of reform as 'necessary' is built around two elements. One is that there have been changes in the international economy and that these changes have created demands that Britain has failed to meet, the other is that previous systems for delivering education within this sector have been inefficient and, as such, have played a part in the failure to meet these new demands.

Both the introduction and the conclusion sections of the White Paper contextualise the reforms in terms of changes in international economy. Reform is necessary as a response to 'the rising demand from employers for more and higher level skills to meet the growing challenge from overseas competitors in world markets' (DES, 1991, Vol. 1, p.2). These demands are depicted in the White Paper as having brought about a need for '21<sup>st</sup> century skills'. These skills are described as being essential to a 'growing high technology economy' (p.49). Although the nature of these skills is not addressed in any detail in the White Paper, the initiatives that will provide the opportunity to gain these skills do emphasise the need for 'modern qualifications' and the role of education in equipping the individual to take part in paid work.

This link between the world of paid work and the role of education is also emphasised in the White Paper in relation to the system of educational provision and the governance structures

of that provision. The White Paper states that the Government intends to 'ensure that colleges are free to respond to the demand from students and employers for high-quality further education' (DES, 1991, Vol. 1, p.58). In order to achieve this it is proposed that the systems of provision should have 'local management' (DES, 1991 Vol. 2, p.61), but that they should also 'operate under a single regulatory framework' (p.4). The White Paper proposes that all colleges where the full-time students comprise more than 15% of the total student load will be given independence from local government within the state education system, and these colleges will be 'established as corporate bodies' (p.20). Provision will now be overseen by a central FEFC, the membership of which will be decided on by the Secretaries of State for both education and employment. The White Paper states 'as well as members with a strong educational background, there will be strong industrial, commercial and professional involvement' (p.12). It is also proposed that a number of regional FEFCs will be established and that these regional councils 'will work closely with the (TECs), taking account of their views of labour market needs and local vocational education and training provision'. At a local level it is proposed that the composition of governing bodies of colleges should be changed. Whereas before these proposed changes 50% of the members of a governing body could represent employment interests and LEA representatives constituted 20% of governors, the White Paper proposes that the existing employment interests of governors should be supplemented by a representative of a local TEC and also states that 'it will not be appropriate for colleges to have on their governing bodies representatives of local authorities' (p.21).

Local authorities will continue to have some 'residual responsibilities' (p.21). They will continue to be responsible for the provision of 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' and for the provision of careers advice and guidance.

### ***Reform as providing opportunity***

The third aspect of the articulation of reform in further education is that the proposed reforms provide 'opportunity'. In the White Paper this is framed in terms of what the proposals can provide for certain individuals and groups in terms of meeting their needs. Reform has a purpose 'for young people', 'for employers' and, although mainly only in the context of the relationship to paid work, for 'society' in general. On the whole, opportunities provided for those who are studying in the post compulsory sector who are not 'young people' are left unarticulated. The changes that are brought about as a result of reform should be that young people have 'a means of qualifying for careers with good prospects and job satisfaction', that employers have a 'means of working with education and training providers' and that for society in general there is the 'prospect of a workforce with first class skills to produce wealth on which our society depends for its standard of living' (DES, 1991, Vol. 1, p.64).

Table 4 below summarises the key aspects of the articulation of reform as an object in statements contained within the White Paper. Alongside this summary I have listed key elements of the articulation of the objects of 'education for adults' and 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' and linked these to statements relating to reform. The purpose of this table is to illustrate how, even though the White Paper contains only two pages comprising six sections relating specifically to the provision of education for adults, 'education for adults' and 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' are articulated as objects not only by the statements that relate directly to them, but by the conceptual network on which these statements draw. The inclusion of certain types of education provision for adults within the reforms outlined in the White Paper articulates the object of 'education for adults' in a certain way. Within the six sections relating to 'education for adults', only one section comprising three sentences addresses the object of 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' directly. However, this object is articulated not only in terms of the direct references to it, but also in terms of what it is not.

Reform	Education for adults	Courses for the leisure interests of adults
<b>Successful</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Stronger educational base through standardisation and measurement of achievement e.g. National Curriculum.</li> <li>b. Prepared for the demands of working life e.g. vocational courses and individual action plans</li> <li>c. Open market in education provision</li> <li>d. Employer involvement in education provision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Courses which require funding from FEFC will have to meet standards criteria and have measurable outcomes.</li> <li>b. Courses funded by FEFC will improve individual adult's qualifications, update their skills and help them seek advancement</li> <li>c. Colleges will no longer be controlled by local authorities, but will become independent corporate bodies. A new system of funding will be put in place that rewards expansion.</li> <li>d. Increased representation of employers' organisations on the governing bodies of the FEFC and colleges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. If courses are not standardised and do not have measurable outcomes they are regarded as 'leisure' not 'education'.</li> <li>b. Flower arranging is not the same as floristry. Courses in floristry may be eligible for funding by FEFC, courses in flower arranging can not.</li> <li>c. Courses can be provided at low cost, and cost met by charging fees.</li> <li>d. Local authority to retain control.</li> </ul>
<b>Necessary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. Meeting the demands of the 21st C economy</li> <li>f. Current provision failing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. Education for adults to be aligned with provision for 16 - 19 year olds. Additional requirements for adults to compensate for previous, and now rectified, failures in compulsory education.</li> <li>f. Local authority control to be removed and replaced by FEFC. Representation of local authorities on new governing bodies inappropriate. Local authorities to play only a residual role.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. Not related to the economy</li> <li>f. Current provision is adequate in this context</li> </ul>
<b>Provides opportunity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>g. for young people</li> <li>h. for employers</li> <li>i. for society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>g. No distinction made between 'young people' and 'adults'.</li> <li>h. Learning for earning, not for leisure.</li> <li>i. Adults as 'part of a workforce with first class skills to produce the wealth on which society depends for its standard of living'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>g. Learning for leisure is of interest to adults</li> <li>h. Flower arranging does not lead to floristry</li> <li>i. In disadvantaged areas leisure courses can have a valuable social function.</li> </ul>

**Table 4: 'Education for adults' and 'Courses for the leisure interests of adults**

## **Adult Education**

The statements that articulate the object of 'adult education' can be viewed as attempts to give meaning to an object that has, in effect, been made 'meaningless' by the proposals contained in the White Paper. These statements can be grouped in two categories that relate to the conceptual network on which they draw.

The first category includes statements that articulate 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' as having a value in and of themselves, and these statements relate to the notion that education has a purpose over and above serving the demands of the economy. When discussing the conceptual network of 'adult education' I outlined some of the ways in which post-compulsory education is articulated as being linked to broader aspects of social welfare. This conceptual network articulates adult education as playing a part in meeting the 'educational, recreational and cultural needs' of the population but also extends its purpose in the sense that contact with other people that is facilitated by attending adult education classes may help with 'alleviating stress' and 'reducing loneliness'.

As the campaign against the White Paper proposals progressed, and the Government became involved in the actual business of negotiating the subsequent Bill through the legislative process, these roles for 'adult education' were articulated more and more frequently not only in relation to these broader purposes, but in relation to the groups of people that benefit from 'adult education', but who might not be able to afford to engage in it if, as was proposed, the cost of the courses was met solely by charging fees.

My reason for highlighting this particular aspect is to draw attention again to the notion that the process of articulation is an on-going one. In the original proposals in the

White Paper 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' warrant very little comment from the Government. The proposals in the White Paper state that 'there can be a case for local authorities subsidising this work, especially in disadvantaged areas, since it can have a valuable social function' (Vol. 1, p.9). What is not clarified in the White Paper proposals is what the Government considers to be 'disadvantaged areas' or what the 'valuable social function' might be. In contrast to this 'gap' in the discourse of 'education for adults', the statements that articulated 'adult education' did so increasingly in relation to the role it played in meeting the needs of different communities in different geographical areas and in terms of meeting the needs of different social groups.

In an article titled 'Learning tainted by leisure' (Beckett, Times Educational Supplement, November 1st, 1991) Sue Cara, principal education officer, talks of the problems that will be faced by rural communities in Norfolk stating that 'the liberal adult education which is part of citizenship and ought to be everyone's right is under threat'. The communities living in metropolitan areas are the concern of Stephen Byers, then deputy leader of North Tyneside Council and Chair of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA) education committee, and he writes of the way in which adult education provides opportunities for older people 'to continue learning as well as meeting others' (Times Educational Supplement, 15th November 1991). The findings of a survey of 82 local authorities commissioned by the Labour Party (Fatchett and Smith, 1991) report that '80% of LEAs predicted less access (to adult education) for low income groups, women and the elderly' due to increased fees and reductions in the range of the adult education curriculum.

Other organisations involved in the campaign against the White Paper proposals, such as the National Association of Women's Clubs; Age Concern; the National



Federation of Community Organisations; The National Federation of Women's Institutes; the Pre-retirement Association; the Pre-school Playgroups Association; and the Church of England, all articulated the 'valuable social function' of adult education. In doing so these organisations also related their concerns to the specific social groups from which they draw their membership or whom they represent. I will return to explore this aspect further in the next sub-section when discussing subjects and subject positions. The point that I wish to emphasise here is the on-going process of articulation of the objects of the discourse.

Outside of the White Paper itself, Government Ministers do articulate the object of 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' and its 'valuable social function'. For example Tim Eggar, Minister of State, writes 'We do of course know the value of leisure classes. They do help some people progress to more formal study and can, in a general way, assist people in their jobs and as citizens. I have no doubt about their contribution to the well-being of local communities' (Letter to Robin Squire MP, 11th Oct. 1991). However this and other responses from other Ministers, including the Secretary of State, are being made in response to the campaign against the White Paper proposals.<sup>7</sup> Whereas in the White Paper 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' were articulated in terms of what they were not, and through this articulation the exclusion of these types of educational provision from the concerns of central government was legitimated, this distinction becomes blurred and increasingly difficult to sustain in subsequent rearticulations of this object. I will return to this aspect again in subsection 5.3.4 when discussing the strategic contexts of the discursive formations.

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<sup>7</sup> This particular letter was sent to Robin Squire MP, then a member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Adult Education in the Houses of Parliament, in response to issues he had raised with the Minister on behalf of the campaign against the White Paper proposals. A copy of this letter was sent to the Director of NIACE with a personal note from Robin Squire that read 'I think we helped shift the argument!'

The second category of statements is those that undermine the distinctions made in the White Paper between 'education for adults' and 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' in terms of the way in which the two objects relate to the demands of the economy. These statements recognise, at least in part, the need for '21st century skills', but at the same time they re-articulate the types of educational provision that are designated by the White Paper as part of 'leisure' as possible 'stepping stones' to other types of learning that can be related more securely to the 'world of work'.

For example, in a response to the White Paper from the Women's Education Policy Committee of NIACE it is stressed that 'informal community-based learning' provides the route through which the majority of women return to education, describing this provision as the 'most accessible and unthreatening entry points to education'. The response goes on to argue that 'in a great number of cases their participation leads to involvement in certificated education and training and identification of employment needs.' (Women's Education Policy Committee NIACE, 1991). The Board of Education of the Church of England states that the proposals 'seem to indicate a profound misunderstanding of the nature of FE provision and the vital interface between the leisure and vocational elements' (NIACE, 1991). Alongside the statements articulated by organisations involved in adult education, there are numerous examples of learners' personal stories being used to illustrate this notion of leisure courses providing a link into further study and employment.

An article titled 'What should they pay for their fluffy toys and keep-fit classes?' (Weaver, Daily Telegraph, 24th Sept. 1991) uses examples of well-known people such as Glenda Jackson (actress) and Antonia Byatt (writer) to illustrate the link between leisure classes and subsequent employment. Other newspaper reports use

the stories of current learners, for example:

'An arrangement with a Norwich psychiatric hospital brought a woman suffering from agoraphobia to a therapeutic flower-arranging class, the first time she had been out of her house for years. Now, 18 months later, she is doing a professional floristry course at Norwich's College of Agriculture and Horticulture'

(Beckett, Times Educational Supplement, November 1st 1991)

This learner's personal story, and many others in newspaper reports during the campaign, focuses on links between the 'valuable social function' of leisure courses and the possibility of these courses providing a pathway into the world of work. Other learners' stories focus more on leisure courses providing the first step back into formal education for learners who have been failed by the compulsory schooling system. Whatever the particular emphasis of each of the stories, what they have in common is that they articulate the object of 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' in a way that undermines the distinction made between this type of educational provision and that of 'education for adults'.

What joins these two categories of statements together, those that articulate 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' as having a 'valuable social function' and those that undermine the distinction between this provision and that articulated as 'education for adults', is that they articulate 'adult education' as an object that cannot easily be conflated with either compulsory education or post-compulsory education provision designed to meet the needs of 'young people'.

NIACE's response to the White Paper proposals begins with a recognition of 'the major tasks facing Britain's needs as an economy and its people's needs as workers'

but then states that 'the role of education and training in a civilised, developed and democratic society with an ageing population are broader than this'. It is then argued that the necessary reforms, 'the major cultural change', will not occur 'if the questions of 'What' 'Why' and 'How' adults learn are not understood.' (NIACE, 1991, p.2). In the previous subsection I outlined how the conceptual network of adult education articulates the notion that the reforms proposed in the White Paper will have the effect of breaking up or by-passing networks of expertise with regards to the provision of post-compulsory education. I outlined how this conceptual network articulates the professional interests of these 'experts' as being a positive influence on educational provision rather than the negative influence as articulated in the conceptual network of reform. In this sub-section we can see how, through the articulation of the object of adult education, these claims to expertise are reinforced.

In this subsection I have considered the objects of 'reform', 'education for adults' and 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' that are articulated within the discursive formation of 'education for adults'. I have highlighted how these objects are articulated not only in terms of what they are, but what they are not. I then went on to explore how this discursive 'gap', this lack of meaning, can provide an opportunity for contestation, a 'space for challenge'.

I will now examine the subjects/subject positions articulated within these discursive formations. In section 3.3.1. I highlighted how both the objects and the subjects of the discourse are not objects or subjects 'in themselves', but are articulated within the discourse itself. I also discussed how the objects and the subjects of the discourse are linked: 'the same set of rules that makes a spherical object a football, makes me a player' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1990, p.101). In my discussion of the subjects articulated

within the discourses I will illustrate how the rules of conceptualisation that are evident in the construction of the objects also inform the construction of subjects.

#### 4.3.3 Reforming Subjects

In Section 3.3.1 I considered how the subject is constituted in two different senses in the Foucauldian notion of discourse. In order to analyse statements within the discourse the analyst must focus on identifying not only 'the subject' that personifies or 'embodies' the discourse, reflecting the collection of norms, values and attributes articulated by the discourse, but also the discursive spaces, or subject positions, which must be adopted for the discourse to become meaningful, that is for 'truths' articulated within the discourse to make sense.

In this sub-section I will outline how statements within the White Paper that articulate the objects of 'reform', 'education for adults' and 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' also articulate the subject of 'the learner' as both 'worker' and 'responsible and aspirational citizen'. I will then go on to consider how the statements create a discursive space, or subject position, from which it is possible to articulate the subject of 'the learner' in this way. In considering this subject position I will reiterate the 'rules' and 'logic' that underpin the conceptual network on which these statements draw:

- the Government's role in relation to reform;
- the justification for the provision of education to become more 'business-like';  
and,
- the role of business in the provision of education.

As discussed in section 3.3 it is the acceptance of, or willingness to be 'subjected to', these rules and the discursive logic that underpins them that constitute the boundaries

of what can, and cannot, be considered a part of the regime of truth or body of knowledge in this particular context. It is through gaining the acceptance for the 'truth' of this knowledge, and therefore the legitimacy for deployment of this knowledge through practice, which links the notions of discourse, knowledge and power. What is distinctive about a genealogical approach to analysing this process is that, whilst accepting that these links illustrate the normative function of the discourse, there is also recognition of the possibility that the discursive logic which underpins these links can be contested. With this in mind, in this subsection I will highlight possible dissonances between the way in which values and attributes are articulated within the subject of 'learner' and people's lived experiences and discuss how the discursive formation of 'adult education' provides alternatives that contest these subjects/subject positions.

### ***Learner as worker***

In the previous sub-section I discussed how 'education for adults' was articulated in relation to the more specific aims of the White Paper, and how these aims were constructed as being necessary because of changes in the international economy and the demands of employers. As John Major, the then Prime Minister states in the foreword to the White Paper, one of the overall aims of the Government's education policy reforms is to 'strengthen the links between education and the world of work' (DES, Vol. 1, 1991). The 'world of work', and the way in which it is privileged within this conceptual network of reform, is the common link between education for 'young people' and 'education for adults'.

Learning activities that are not directly related to paid employment will, in the main, have to be funded by the individual. The learner as a subject is articulated as someone who acknowledges that they must learn in order to enter and progress within the 'world

of work', but also as someone who, should they choose to learn for reasons not related to paid employment, acknowledges that the provision of the learning will not be classified as a common welfare good and, as such, will not be funded via the state. The implication of this is that the learner must acknowledge that they must pay for that learning with funds accrued in other ways. For the majority of learners these funds will be accrued through engagement, in one way or another, with the 'world of work'.

This particular articulation of 'learner as worker' has repercussions for the coherence and relevance of the discursive formation of 'education for adults'. Firstly, the maintenance of a binary opposition such as that of work/leisure requires that the distinction between the two remains clear cut, that there is no possibility of the boundaries between the two being permeable. A discursive formation that allows for no connections between the two in order to maintain its legitimacy creates a subject position that is perhaps not easily recognised by people in relation to their everyday lives.

Secondly, a discursive formation that presents the 'world of work' as being a constant throughout people's lives, also does not recognise the other domains in which people live out their lives and on which they may place value. This point can be illustrated by the example of the statement within the White Paper that identifies the role of Government's policies as being to 'promote continuous learning from the age of 5 through education and throughout **working** life' (p.3, my emphasis),

It could be argued that these distinctions between work and leisure within the discursive formation represent the material practices of dominant interests that operate 'outside' of the discourse and that these distinctions provide evidence of the way in which these material practices determine discursive practices. Once again, the

argument of this thesis is that to view these subjects in this way is to ignore the relationship between social policy and people's lived experiences, and to ignore this relationship is to ignore what I believe is distinctive about a 'discourse-analytical eye' (Andersen, 2003, p.xix). Inasmuch as policy discourses rely on a process of 'meaning making' for the effectiveness of their normative function, and that 'meaning making' is not a process that can simply be imposed, then those policy discourses will present opportunities for resistance and subversion.

### ***Learner as responsible and aspirational citizen***

In Section 3.3.1 I highlighted the importance of focusing on identifying statements, as opposed to discursive formations, in the initial stages of an archaeological analysis. This focus on identifying statements at the point of emergence, exemplified by the analyst emphasising questions of 'what?' and 'how?' rather than 'why?' enables the analyst to explore the way in which ideas, issues or phenomena come into being without presupposing their nature or reducing them to an expression of something other than themselves. The identification of the subject of the 'learner as responsible and aspirational citizen' provides an illustration of the usefulness of this strategy.

The attributes and values that are articulated in the subject of 'learner as worker' are relatively easy to identify given the number of references to the links between education and the 'world of work'. The way in which the attributes and values that relate to 'learner as responsible and aspirational citizen' are articulated more subtly within the documents. The qualities exemplified by this subject could be viewed as a series of 'taken for granted's' that provide the background rationale for statements in the White Paper about the 'world of work' and peoples engagement with that world.



In subsection 4.3.2 I described how reform was articulated as having been a success because 'a revolution in learning' had equipped people for 'the demands of working life'. Two of the key aspects of that 'revolution' had been the introduction of standardised measures of achievement, and through the introduction of these measures, the possibility of providing learners with 'a recognised means of recording their attainment' (DES, 1991, Vol.1, p.49) Throughout the White Paper there are further examples of this emphasis on 'measuring achievement' and it is usually combined with the notions of higher achievement/attainment and progression. For example, young people 'need to be able to see that acquiring skills opens up the prospect of progressing to higher levels of pay and more rewarding jobs' (DES, Vol1, p.52), and in terms of 'education for adults' the reforms are designed to 'help them to improve their qualifications, update their skills and seek advancement' (DES, Vol 2, p.8). These reforms are not just articulated in terms of the subjects that are being learnt, but also in terms of how this measuring and recording of achievement combined with planning for higher attainment means that learners can 'develop their personal effectiveness alongside their knowledge and skills' (DES, Vol.1, p.12).

John Major summarises the aspirational nature of these reforms in the Foreword to the White Paper - 'Our objective is simple...We want to knock down the barriers to opportunity. We want higher standards. We want more choice'. Throughout the White Paper it is stressed that in order to take advantage of the increased opportunities, to attain the higher standards and make the informed choices the learner must be both self motivated and self monitoring - both 'aspirational' and 'responsible'.

The 'learner as responsible and aspirational citizen' provides a useful analytical tool that helps unpack some of the 'taken for granted' that underpin the way in which people's involvement in the 'world of work' is articulated, but if that were my sole

purpose in exploring this subject then it would be equally useful to combine the two subjects into one – ‘the learner as responsible and aspirational **worker**’. However, it is the way in which the articulation of the learner as responsible and aspirational links to the notion of ‘citizenship’, a public world that consists of more than the ‘world of work’. That illustrates the value of focusing on individual statements and not adopting a reductive or interpretative approach at too early a point in the analysis.

Within the White Paper there are very few statements that articulate the role of education as being in any way related to a setting outside of the ‘world of work’. However, those statements that might be identified as articulating a connection between the learner, the world of work and systems of social relations outside of the world of work draw on the notion of the learner as self-monitoring and self motivated. For example ‘skilled and motivated’ people not only make a contribution ‘to the success of their companies’ but also their ‘local communities’ (DES, Vol. 1 p.64). As already noted in section 4.2.1 reform provides opportunities for a ‘workforce with first class skills’ to produce ‘the wealth on which our society depends for its standard of living’. In the chapter entitled ‘Better Motivation: Higher Achievement’ the previous levels of low achievement in education are described not only as a waste of the individual’s potential, but as ‘a waste for the country’ (p.46).

These references to ‘communities’, ‘society’ and ‘the country’ invoke the notion of a role for the learner that extends beyond the explicit domain of ‘world of work’. Once again, it could be argued that the articulation of this subject in this way, connecting learner, the world of work and a wider public sphere of ‘citizenship’ illustrates the dominance of certain interests that operate ‘outside’ of the discourse. However, if we adjust our focus, we can see that this particular articulation could present opportunities for resistance and subversion. The connections that are made between distinct elements in any

articulation, or process of meaning-making, should not be considered to be fixed or absolute. So whilst, in this instance, the connection is made *from* the learner *to* the broader public sphere *via* the world of work it should not be assumed that this is the only way in which this connection can be made meaningful. What is articulated within these statements is the positive value of contributing to a 'local community' and the notion of a 'society' which is not only interdependent in terms of wealth generation, but in other ways as well.

Having explored the values and attributes articulated within the subjects of 'learner as worker' and 'learner as responsible and aspirational citizen' I will now turn to an alternative subject, that of 'adult learner' and explore how this subject is articulated by the discourses of 'adult education'.

### **Adult education**

In the previous subsections I considered how this discursive formation undermines the distinction between learning for work and learning as part of leisure, in terms of privileging one over the other. I have also discussed how learning is articulated as being part of domains outside the 'world of work', and how it articulates the learning that takes place in these domains as being of value. I have also explored how this discursive formation draws on a 'philosophy' that places a broad notion of citizenship at the centre of learning. I have explained how these elements of this discursive formation articulate 'adult education' as an object that cannot easily be conflated with either compulsory education or post-compulsory education provision designed to meet the needs of 'young people'. Adult education is something that 'adults do' and because of this it is necessary to consider these types of educational provision in relation to the demands and needs of adults. The discursive formation of adult education articulates these demands and needs as diverse. It would be difficult to

articulate the norms, values and attributes in a single subject but in general terms we could talk of a subject that values and participates in learning - an 'adult learner'.

I have discussed how the 'rules' of this formation allow a discursive space, or subject position, to be articulated that constructs professionals/practitioners who work in post-compulsory education as having the expertise necessary to speak of and observe the subject and in exploring the subject of 'adult learner' I will draw on a project carried out by NIACE (1991) that 'draws on the experience of people working in further and adult education and reports from individual colleges' (McGivney, 1991, p.167). The findings of the report were referred to in many of the newspaper and journal articles that reported the opposition to the proposals of the White Paper. In this context the subject of 'adult learner' is articulated very specifically as 'people over 21 who have had a break since completing their initial education' but this object is also articulated more broadly as representing:

- a wide range of age groups
- a wide range of occupational groups
- those in employment and those out of work
- women 'returners'
- people facing career transitions
- people with special needs
- people preparing for retirement

As a subject 'adult learners' also have 'characteristics and learning needs which are not the same as those of school leavers'. They may be studying for the purposes of:

- gaining initial qualifications
- further qualifications
- retraining or updating their skills

- help with finding new employment
- help with basic education or English language skills
- preparation for entering higher education
- ways of dealing with disability
- to pursue a new interest

and may have:

- no recent educational experience
- few or no formal qualifications
- a wealth of acquired experience, knowledge and skills (although these may not have been certificated)

One of the benefits of such a broad articulation of the subject would appear to be that it is very 'inclusive'. In one sense the values and attributes that are being articulated here, and which the individual must 'subject themselves to' in order for the subject to appear meaningful, are that they must value learning and be willing to participate in the learning process. However, we shouldn't ignore that the process of meaning making that relates to this subject does have a normative function and there will be individuals to whom, however broad the articulation of this subject, the subject of adult learner will not 'make sense'.

I will discuss this in more detail in the final section of this chapter when I turn my attention to the implications of the two discursive formations outlined here in relation to the notions of inclusion and participation.

Having outlined the way in which the values and attributes of 'learner as worker' and 'learner as responsible and aspirational citizen' are articulated, and discussed the alternative discourses of adult education, I will now turn to the subject positions that

allow a space for speaking and observing and, in particular, the rules of the discourse that form the boundaries of these spaces. My purpose in reiterating these rules is to return once again to the issue of 'spaces for challenge'. In the subsection 'Reform as a conceptual network' my focus was on the way in which the proposals in the White Paper were linked to broader changes in the social welfare system. In the concluding part of this sub-section I will focus specifically on the implications for the newly independent post-compulsory college sector.

### ***The Government's role in relation to reform.***

As already discussed, although the Government's role is articulated as being responsible for proposing the reform in educational policy, this responsibility arises in terms of a 'response to the rising demand from employers for more and higher level skills to meet the growing challenge from overseas competitors in world markets' (DES, Vol. 1 p.2). At the same time, although the Government is responsible for creating a framework for reform in light of these demands 'it is for individuals, young people, employers and parents to act upon it' (p.65). Furthermore, in the White Paper although the Government has a responsibility to introduce the reforms and provide the resources to fund them, the implementation of these reforms places responsibilities and duties elsewhere. Volume 2 of the White Paper is entitled 'The Challenge to Colleges' and this document places 'responsibilities' on colleges, examining and validating bodies, external assessors and 'duties' on FEFCs. So the 'government as reformer' constitutes a subject position that limits the role of government to providing a framework for reform in education provision. The discursive logic of this subject position requires the acceptance that neither the conditions that generated the need/demand for that reform nor the successful outcome of that reform are contained within that role.

### ***Education as business***

In Volume 1 of the White Paper the Government outlines the main aims of this proposed legislation. It is stated that to achieve these aims requires 'a major cultural change in our attitudes towards further education and training' (p.4). As already discussed in sub-section 4.3.2 one of the ways in which reform is constituted as having been successful in the past is through the introduction of an 'open market in education and training' and the introduction of this 'open market' into the post-compulsory sector is articulated as being necessary in order to remedy 'any deficiencies that remain'.

In Volume 2 of the White Paper, 'The Challenge to Colleges', the Government details how 'colleges will rise to the challenges of offering education and training which the students and the country need' (p.64). Whilst there is recognition within the White Paper that 'education' as a good may require certain aspects of the market to be moderated differently from other goods, many of the basic principles for the production and consumption of this good reflect the notion of a more 'business-like' approach.

For example, 'financial memoranda' will be drawn up to govern the financial relationships between Government, the FEFCs and the newly independent colleges (p.13). These memoranda will establish the conditions on which grants are allocated and reflect notions, which are described in Volume 1 of the White Paper as producing 'Better Colleges' (p.58), of the need for increased flexibility, gains in efficiency of production and reduction in unit cost. These conditions will 'encourage institutions to broaden their financial base by developing funding from other sources' (p.14). The level of funds available will take account of 'the scope for increased efficiency within the sector' (p.26). The element of funding that is based around student numbers will 'take into account the differential costs of classroom-or workshop-based studies' and

amounts based on a sliding scale will be calculated 'so as to provide a powerful incentive to expand participation' (p.27).

In terms of consumption, the newly independent colleges will have 'more freedom to expand their provision and respond more flexibly to the demands of their customers' (Vol. 1 p.3). Throughout Volume 2 of the White Paper these 'demands' are framed in terms of the qualities personified within the subjects of 'learner as worker' and 'learner as responsible and aspirational citizen'.

The discursive logic of this subject position requires an acceptance that the demands of the 'customers' are reflected in these subjects, but also that the best way for these demands to be met is through a more 'business-like' approach to education provision.

### ***Employers as educators***

Whilst 'the learner' is articulated as a customer whose demands should be met, the subject position of employers as educators takes this articulation a step further. From this subject position employers and organisations that represent their interests are best placed to judge what type of provision should be prioritised by the newly independent colleges.

In Volume 2 of the White Paper, *The Challenge to Colleges*, it is stated that 'colleges will generally be well placed to make judgements about local needs, but they will not be in a position to make judgements about regional or national needs'. On this basis the governing bodies of colleges should 'take account of the views of TECs and will be able to draw on labour market and other relevant information provided by them'.



As already discussed in subsection 4.2.1 the influence of employers' organisations on both the FEFCs and the governing bodies of the colleges was to be increased. In outlining the 'duties and powers' of the FEFCs it is stated that 'the Councils will have powers to determine the general character of a college; they will only fund the kinds of education which they consider appropriate to be made by that college' (p.15). In the section that deals with the 'instruments and articles of government' of the colleges it is stated that 'governors have to make sure that the local business community is adequately represented on governing bodies' (p22). This increased representation will give employers the 'opportunity to influence and support the curriculum and its delivery' and the involvement of TECs offers 'opportunities to make education more relevant, to raise enterprise awareness and industrial understanding amongst teachers and students' (p.47)

Having reiterated the rules of conceptualisation that relate to the discursive formation of 'education for adults' and explored how these seek to legitimate certain subject positions, I will now turn to the rules of conceptualisation for 'adult education' in order to illustrate how these rules legitimate professionals/practitioners involved in post-compulsory education as 'experts'.

### **Adult Education**

In previous subsections I have discussed how the discursive formation of adult education articulates professionals/practitioners who work in post-compulsory education as 'experts' and in concluding this particular subsection I want to explore how this particular 'expertise' is deployed in terms of challenging the role of business interests and 'the world of work' in relation to the independent college sector. Once again the discursive formation makes use of the articulation of adult education as being something that cannot be easily conflated with other educational provision.

In her report on the research project 'Opening Colleges to Adult Learners' Veronica McGivney (1991) first makes the point that in terms of the customer base for the services offered by colleges people over the age of 19 represent two thirds of enrolments. She comments that this change has not been recognised 'even by educational policy-makers many of whom still perceive the further education sector exclusively as a school leaver training route' (p.167). McGivney goes on to explain how the research project 'draws on the experience of people working in further and adult education and reports from individual colleges in examining the issues confronting colleges at the different stages of their contact with adult learners.'

What is particularly interesting about the way in which the report articulates the findings of the project is that the language that is used reflects what might be considered to be the 'language of business or the market'. Not only are 'access issues' and 'learning issues' considered but the report highlights the importance of 'the interface between the college and the public: i.e how a college presents itself; its physical appearance; how staff deal with queries and requests for information; how initial transactions with the public - such as enrolment procedures - are arranged'. The report also considers how colleges can become more responsive to diverse groups of learners, and discusses how this responsiveness can be reflected in terms of curriculum design and forms of assessment. It is also noted in the report that colleges are trying to adapt to the speed and unpredictability of changes in the market. McGivney also comments that the diversity of adults who are returning to learning, and the range of motives they might have for doing so, 'makes a nonsense of the traditional vocational/non-vocational divide'.

The relevance of this particular research project and the report written by McGivney is

that whilst the subject positions do draw on the rules for conceptualisation of 'adult education':

- post compulsory education is articulated as having a value that extends beyond the economic rationale articulated within the conceptual network of 'reform';
- the proposed White Paper reforms are articulated as a 'threat' to post-compulsory education ;
- those who are involved in the delivery of post-compulsory education are legitimated as the 'experts';

the report not only uses the 'language of business' but also asserts that the post-compulsory sector is already attempting to address many of the issues that the Government claims will be brought about by the proposals for reform articulated within the White Paper.

In considering the omissions of certain concepts that would seem to have an obvious connection with the conceptual network of 'reform' (p. 107 of this thesis) I highlighted how, despite emphasising the dynamic and responsive nature of 'the market', and through this articulation legitimating greater involvement of business organisations in the post-compulsory education, the conceptual network conflated the needs of adult learners with the needs of 'young people' or 'school leavers'. In this report we see that 'dynamic and responsive' element being articulated from within the discursive formation of 'adult education' and professionals/practitioners working within post-compulsory education being articulated as the 'experts' who know best how the needs of this diverse 'customer base' can be met.

I have outlined the relationships between the subjects of 'learner as worker' and 'learner as responsible and aspirational citizen' and the objects of 'reform', 'education

for adults' and 'courses for the leisure interests of adults'. Using examples from the White Paper I have highlighted how the conceptual network of reform informs both the construction of both these objects and subjects, but I have also discussed how these articulations can be contested. I have emphasised the point that as any normative function of a discourse relies on a process of 'meaning-making', the outcome of which can never be taken for granted, there are always opportunities for the normative power of these discourses to be subverted or resisted.

#### 4.3.4 The formation of strategies

In Section 3.3.1 I discussed how in the initial stages of an archaeological analysis it is important that the focus remains on questions of 'how' and 'what' rather than 'why'. I also discussed the importance of not confusing the notion of a strategy in this approach to analysis, which is the context from which the statement derives its status in terms of time, place and materiality, with a more 'everyday' notion of strategy that implies that a purpose must be identified for the statement. However, in the same section, I outlined how once the focus becomes the discursive formation rather than the individual statements, the focus on the regularities across statements promotes questions about how the nature of any particular strategy allows for interdiscursivity between it and other strategies, and what the nature of that interdiscursivity might be.

I have structured my discussion in this particular section of this chapter in such a way as to allow for comparison between two discursive formations within the individual subsections that discuss the conceptual networks, the objects and the subjects/subject positions. In one sense I have imposed this structure over the discursive formations that I have examined. My purpose, as stated at the beginning of this chapter, was to provide an illustration of the process of genealogical analysis that would highlight the

particular value of this approach but also to provide a framework for further chapters of data analysis. I am conscious however that this structure may have the effect of emphasising the 'dominance' of the discourses of 'education for adults' in the sense that despite all the illustrations of these discourses being contested that I have explored, the Government was still able to get the Bill through the legislative process with most of the major proposals intact. In this subsection I propose to focus on how the notion of strategic contexts can help explore an example of 'micro-manipulation' which did have long term consequences for the original Government proposals. In order to do this I want to return to the issues highlighted in the previous subsections relating to the distinction between work and leisure, and the way in which this distinction shapes the articulation of the objects of 'education for adults' and 'courses for the leisure interests of adults'. The boundaries of this distinction have implications for the coherence and relevance of the discursive formation as a whole, and as such present spaces for challenge. Before moving on to consider this specific example I want to outline in general terms the considerations that must be borne in mind when analysing the strategic contexts from which statements and formations draw their status.

In the introduction to this chapter I detailed the sources of the data accessed in relation to this analysis of the proposals contained within the White Paper and the subsequent campaign against some of these proposals. Each of these sources would represent a different strategy in the sense that they each represent a different context of time, place and materiality. The strategic context for the statements identified in the White Paper is formed by the institutional practices of government in relation to the accepted procedures for the production of legislation. However, the strategic context changes if we seek to examine statements in another source of data, for example Hansard records of debates during the Readings of the Bill in the Houses of Parliament. These

debates are also a part of the institutional practices of government, but they differ from the White Paper in other ways. For example time has elapsed between the publishing of the White Paper and debates in the Houses of Parliament, and in this instance during that time the campaign against certain proposals has been launched and there has been lobbying carried out in order to gain support for these objections from members of both Houses of Parliament. In terms of materiality, although both the White Paper and the Hansard Records are written texts they reflect very different contexts of production: one being a written text that will have been carefully constructed and subject to revision whilst the other is a record of speeches made during debates where reading from prepared texts is not allowed but where questioning from other Members of Parliament is an integral part of the process. Another example of the way in which the strategic context of the statements differs in relation to the source of data being analysed would be the copies of the speeches made by the Secretary of State for Education during the period between the publishing of the White Paper in May 1991 and the Bill attaining Royal Assent in March 1992. Whilst these speeches may not derive their strategic context from being part of the formal accepted procedures for the production of legislation, they will have been carefully constructed and subject to revision. In this context however that revision will also have been affected by events such as the campaign against some of the proposals in the White Paper and the subsequent debates in the Houses of Parliament. The speeches will also have been constructed in relation to the audience to whom they will be delivered.

In the White Paper the Government puts forward its policy proposals and states that it 'will take account of the views of interested parties on these proposals in preparing the legislation' (DES, 1991, Vol.2, p.42). Whilst this is formally a process of consultation, in

terms of Command Papers<sup>8</sup> it represents a set of proposals that are further developed than those that would be represented by a Green Paper. So whilst the White Paper is a consultation document it would have been possible for the Government to put forward its proposals in a different document that was still a part of the institutional practices of government, but would have suggested that the proposals were less fixed.

It is important to note I do not raise the strategic context of the type of Command Paper in order to assign a motivation to this strategy, to attempt to address the question of 'why?' but rather to highlight that this strategic context does begin to frame the nature of the interdiscursivity between strategies in other statements. During the campaign that was launched in response to the White Paper the Government denied that the proposals would have the effect on provision that the campaigners argued they would. The main argument put forward by the Government was that the proposals in the White Paper had been 'misunderstood'. In a different strategic context, that of a Green Paper, it might be expected that some of these 'misunderstandings' might have been clarified before being put forward in the form of statements of policy in the White Paper. Therefore, regardless of any possible *motivation* for putting these proposals forward in this particular strategic context, the status of this strategic context has implications for the way in which the government has to rearticulate the boundaries between 'education for adults' and 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' within subsequent strategic contexts. Below I will outline two examples that illustrate the interdiscursive relations between statements made in different strategic contexts, but also illustrate how these contexts provide spaces for challenge.

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<sup>8</sup> Command Papers are documents that a government, by royal command, presents to Parliament for consideration. They include White Papers and Green Papers. The former contain statements of policy or explanations of proposed legislation; the latter are essentially discussion documents.

One of the first actions of resistance against the proposals in the White Paper was to encourage a letter writing campaign in order to lobby Members of Parliament on an individual basis. Two months after the White Paper was published, in a letter to Members of Parliament (Clarke, 1991), the Secretary of State for Education writes 'You may be receiving letters from constituents about education for adults. I hope it may be helpful if I outline the Government's policy in this area'. The Secretary of State then went on to restate the Government's priorities in terms of the education provision that would come under the control of the FEFCs, 'we think it is right that the Government should offer financial support for a broad range of provision, particularly courses aimed at improving skills and offering academic and vocational qualifications'. The Secretary of State then states that 'recreation and leisure courses also make a significant contribution' but maintains that the cost of these courses should be met as far as possible from student fees. He also writes that 'in a number of areas individuals already pay full cost for leisure classes, *as they do for other leisure activities*' (my emphasis).

In this letter the Secretary of State reiterates the Government's position in terms of privileging 'education for adults' and re-articulates the object of 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' as part of 'other leisure activities' rather than 'education'. However, in the recognition of the value attributed to 'recreation and leisure courses' in the lives of, in this particular instance the writers of these letters, the boundaries between the binary opposition of work/leisure which serves to articulate the 'world of work' as central to people's lives could be viewed as a little less 'secure'.

Another element of the campaign that lobbied against the proposed legislation was to make use of various fora in order to problematise the distinctions between 'education for adults' and 'courses for the leisure interests of adults'. As already outlined in section 4.3.2 these distinctions are not dealt with in any great detail within the White Paper but



rely on the more general aims for post-compulsory education to establish what 'education for adults' is and, in turn, what 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' are not. Again, it is worth noting that this is the kind of detail that is usually a matter for discussion in a Green Paper. This 'problematism' of the distinction focused on two areas. Firstly that engagement in 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' may provide a pathway to engagement in 'education for adults', and, secondly, that the nature of certain types of provision meant that the distinction between the two is not easily established.

In section 4.3.2 I outlined various examples of how 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' were articulated as possible stepping-stones or pathways to engagement in 'education for adults'. Also in section 4.3.2, when discussing the way in which the objects 'education for adults' and 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' were specified and categorised, I outlined how the particular articulation of 'reform' as having been successful previously in other areas of education provision was reflected in the FEFC criteria for funding in terms of standardisation of curricula and measurement of outcomes. During the campaign against the White Paper proposals the argument was put forward that these criteria, rather than clarifying which types of provision should be included in each category, may lead to a duplication of provision that would be wasteful of resources and expensive for the tax-payer. One example that was used was how, previously, the provision of French lessons may contain learners who were learning as part of a leisure interest but may also contain learners who, given the increasing trade relations with other European countries, were required to learn French in order to seek advancement in the career. However, if the White Paper proposals were implemented, two separate classes would be required.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> September 1991 the Secretary of State held a press conference where he stated that the proposals in the White Paper had been misunderstood and that he 'had never sought to draw a distinction between vocational and non-vocational courses' (Spencer, Times Educational Supplement, 27<sup>th</sup> September 1991) and that LEAs would retain a duty to secure the provision of leisure courses for adults and should take account of students' ability to pay when deciding on fee arrangements. The Secretary of State maintained that funds would be made available to LEAs but it would be the responsibility of the individual LEAs as to how it would be used:

'If they decide to reduce their support for the further education of adults, that will be a consequence of their own policies, not our reforms nor a change in central Government funding. The Government is providing funds to subsidise these courses. If you are worried about the future of your course, go to your local education authority and raise it with them'

This was described in the newspaper reports as a 'partial climbdown' (ibid.), 'a reprieve' (Bates, The Guardian, 25<sup>th</sup> September 1991) and a 'move to calm fears' (Massey, Daily Mail, 25<sup>th</sup> September).

Once again 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' are articulated as being a separate object in the sense that they will not form a part of 'education for adults' and will not be the concern of the new sector being established in relation to this provision. On the other hand, in stating that it was not the intention of the Government to use the distinction of vocational/non-vocational in order to establish what should be included in 'education for adults' one of the main aspects on which the articulation of this object is constructed has been undermined. There is also a recognition that whilst 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' is not considered as part of 'education for adults', the Government still has responsibilities, albeit limited, in terms of funding this provision.

This responsibility takes the form of funding provided through the Standard Spending Assessment (SSA)<sup>9</sup> formula whereby central government allocates funds for spending on local government services by local government authorities. Channelling funds through SSAs does not guarantee that these funds will be spent in any one particular area. It was also claimed at the time by opponents of the White Paper proposals that only one in ten LEAs spent up to their SSA on adult education. This claim was disputed later in correspondence from The Minister of State for Education Tim Eggar (1991) when he stated that 'I believe the original source for the claim derived from an internal exercise by HMI some two or three years ago. It was never intended for publication and HMI are no longer satisfied that their methods were valid'.

In a debate in the House of Commons during the Second Reading of the Bill the Secretary of State responded to continued criticism by other Members of Parliament with regards to the allocation of funding to subsidise the provision of 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' by stating that 'the argument that courses will end or fees will rise as a direct result of these reforms is totally fallacious' (Goodwin, *The Independent*, 12th February 1992).

During the first Adult Learners' Week in 1992, held 3 days after the 1992 Bill gained Royal Assent, Tim Boswell (Further and Higher Education Minister) spoke at a seminar organised by NIACE titled 'Learning for its Own Sake'. The Minister's speech reaffirmed the Government's commitment to funding education provision via local authorities. In Chapter 7 I will return again to the issue of funding for provision of certain types education, which in the context of the White Paper are articulated as 'courses for the

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<sup>9</sup> The SSAs were the formulae that were used at this time for deciding the level of central Government subsidy for local Government activity. The outcome of the SSA impacts on the levels of local taxes that must be raised in order to fund local authority spending plans. These formulae have always proved controversial and have been revised on many occasions.

leisure interests of adults', in order to explore how practitioners have sought to make claims and influence the agenda in relation to the funding of provision. The point that I want to emphasise here is how the strategic context from which statements draw their status has implications for the deployment and contestation of discourses.

Finally, this subsection has been different in format from the previous three. The purpose of this change in format was to emphasise the way in which articulation is an on-going process. Andersen's suggested framework of questions for the analysis of strategies focus on whether the nature of the strategy allows for interdiscursivity between statements and what the nature of that interdiscursivity might be. It would be possible to explore these questions, and to identify the regularities across the statements, in a way that highlights the 'consistency' of the response by the Government in relation to the funding of 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' i.e. these courses remained outside the remit of the FEFCs in terms of guaranteeing provision and funding. Indeed, some approaches to discourse analysis would use this aspect of interdiscursivity to justify a focus on processes of 'macromanipulation'. What I believe my discussion illustrates, however, is that despite a concerted effort on behalf of the Government to remove these concerns from the policy agenda, they did not succeed in doing so. These issues were raised time and again during this particular policy making process and then, as I will discuss further in Chapter 6, they continued to impact on the process of policy implementation. The effectiveness of any discursive formation should be judged not only by the way in which it prescribes the rules and logic of the discourse, but on how successful it is in excluding any alternatives.

In the four subsections above I have explored, in turn, the conceptual networks, the objects, the subjects/subject positions and the strategic contexts relating to the two discursive formations that I have referred to as 'education for adults' and 'adult

education'. In each subsection I have provided a detailed illustration of the process of 'doing a genealogy' in the sense that I have shown how statements can be analysed in terms of the broader conceptual networks on which they draw, objects and subjects/subject positions that they articulate and the strategic contexts from which they draw their status. As the examples that I have used in this section are designed to provide a snapshot of the process of genealogical analysis, the genealogy explored in this project extends beyond the events explored in this chapter, I have only conducted some preliminary analysis in terms of the ruptures and irregularities that characterise the move from the archaeological to the genealogical 'steps' of a genealogical analysis. In this preliminary analysis I have focused on examples that present possible sites of resistance or contestation - the 'spaces for challenge' - in order to illustrate what I have argued is the particular usefulness of a genealogical analysis. The final task of this chapter is to provide the context for the chapters of data analysis that follow, and I will begin this task by exploring the implications of the two discursive formations I have considered in this section in terms of the way in which the notions of 'inclusion' and 'participation' are articulated.

#### **4.4 Summary and Conclusion**

In Chapter 2 of this thesis, when discussing my rationale for this research project and outlining the issues that the project seeks to explore, I outlined how, in the current policy environment, the notions of 'social inclusion' and 'widening participation' are central to the development and implementation of education policy within the post-compulsory sector. These particular terms, however, are not mentioned at all in the White Paper published in 1991, and very rarely in any of the texts that I analysed in relation to the particular policy developments discussed in this chapter. Despite this the principles that underpin the notions of 'social inclusion' and 'widening participation' are still articulated in these texts.

Policy discourses articulate sets of rules and categorisations which define the boundaries of the values and norms of a society which individuals, should they wish to be 'included' in that society, must subject themselves to. The discourses also identify social groups who are currently excluded and articulate the way in which certain policy interventions can provide individuals within these groups with a 'route' to inclusion. The ways in which the discourses articulate the values and norms shape the nature of the policy interventions that are constructed as legitimate.

In Chapter 2 I discussed different models of social inclusion and outlined current debates within the literature concerning the way in which social inclusion is constructed within social policy and the impact this has on recent policy initiatives. One of my concerns was that policy initiatives developed by the Social Exclusion Unit constructed a narrow definition of social inclusion that emphasised equality of opportunity brought about through participation in paid work. I also discussed how, through the work of the SEU, participation in post-compulsory education has become a key mechanism in the

delivery of policy initiatives designed to promote social inclusion. I explored how Government policy initiatives that structure participation in education focus on which types of provision are needed, how this impacts on the role of providers, who those providers should be and what is to be included in the curricula being taught. I also considered how, in seeking to engage individuals or groups, Government policy can be based around a combination of incentives to participate and sanctions against those who 'choose' not to participate. I outlined debates in the literature that contest the notion that current policy initiatives seek to 'widen' participation, but rather seek to 'increase' participation in a system of post-compulsory education that in the past has reinforced structural inequalities or 'social exclusion'. I argued that, in the current policy environment, the distinction between widening and increasing participation is increasingly complex. My concern is that, despite a focus on widening participation in terms of providers, modes of provision and curricula, the continuing centrality of paid employment as a route to social inclusion prevents a much broader conceptualisation of widening participation, as outlined in Chapter 2, from being realised.

With these debates and discussion in mind, in the next two subsections I want to explore the implications of the two discursive formations that I have outlined in this chapter in terms of the way in which the notions of 'inclusion' and 'participation' are articulated. This discussion will serve as connection between the key concerns of this thesis and the particular 'snapshot' of a genealogical analysis that I have explored in this chapter. In other words these first two subsections will be framed around the first two research questions that have informed this project, and they are:

- ◆ *How is the notion of widening participation in post-compulsory learning linked to social inclusion in educational policy texts, promotional materials and practices?*
- ◆ *Who do these discourses include/exclude, and how?*

In section 4.3 of this chapter, I discussed how those involved in the campaign against the White Paper proposals attempted to resist and challenge the policy implications of those proposals. Despite this campaign the Government did manage to negotiate the Higher and Further Education Act (1992) through the legislative process, and regulate the reform of the post-compulsory education sector in line with the original White Paper proposals. If we were to analyse current trends in post-compulsory education policy it would be possible to trace the influence of the 'successful' discourses of 'education for adults'. I have argued, however, that what this focus might neglect is the continuing influence of discourses similar to those articulated in relation to 'adult education'. Likewise, the emergence of new discourses that rearticulate issues relating to inclusion and participation, and the significance of these new discourses in shaping policy making and implementation, might also be neglected in analyses. To ensure that the focus on possible 'spaces for challenge' is maintained, in subsection 4.4.3 I will outline those spaces that I identified at this early stage of my genealogical analysis. In other words I will begin to address the third research question that has informed this project:

- ◆ *How do these discourses affect the practice of those involved in education policy initiatives designed to facilitate the movement from non-participation to participation?*

#### 4.4.1 Education for Adults

##### ***Inclusion***

As discussed throughout this chapter, the primary mechanism for inclusion is through involvement in paid employment. Compulsory education, which has been reformed in order to 'improve the quality of learning and its relevance to work' (DES,1991,Vol.1,p.8), gives young people 'a better start in life' by offering them



'choices and opportunities that did not exist for previous generations' (Introduction). These choices and opportunities centre on their inclusion in 'a workforce with first class skills to produce the wealth on which our society depends for its standard of living' (p.64). The post-compulsory education system provides the motivation and opportunities for higher, and continuing, achievement through individuals 'improving their qualifications, updating their skills and seeking advancement in their current or future career' (DES, 1991, Vol.2, p.8). It is through participation that individuals can make 'a real contribution to the success of their companies and local communities' (DES, 1991, Vol. 1 p.64).

Those who do not choose to be included will be wasting their potential and will be 'a waste for the country' (DES, 1991, Vol.2, p.46).

### ***Participation***

In the main the policy initiatives outlined in the White Paper are designed to increase participation rather than widen it, and when participation is mentioned in this context it is always in terms of 'increasing participation'. In terms of providers of education there is to be an increase in the participation of employers' organisations, for learners the stated aims of the initiatives are to increase participation in education not only in the period immediately after leaving school, but across all of their working lives. The widening of participation, however, is implicit in these proposals in a number of ways.

Firstly, in terms of types of education that compensate for failures in compulsory education, such as courses for adults with English as a second language, adults with special educational needs and adults with problems in relation to basic skills are to be included in a system of education that prioritises progression from these forms of

learning to the 'mainstream'. In a set of proposals that construct post-compulsory education almost exclusively as meeting the needs of 'school leavers' or 'young people' this is the one example where there appears to be a recognition that there needs to be a widening of provision in relation to the specific needs of adults.

Secondly, as illustrated in the discussion of the subject of 'learner as responsible and aspirational citizen', changes in the curricula will mean that skills learnt will not only be related to completing tasks associated with a specific paid job, but will equip people for 'the demands of working life'. Learning will involve developing skills in how to measure achievement and set goals. These skills are designed to help learners make informed choices in terms of 'improving their qualifications, updating their skills and seeking advancement in their current or future career'. Through the development of these skills, alongside those needed to actually fulfil the role that they engage in paid employment, individuals will be able to take advantage of the opportunities offered. So whilst the focus of the proposals remains firmly on paid employment and the workplace, there is a recognition that curricula can be developed that provide opportunities to develop a broader range of skills which have a positive impact on an individual's role within the workplace.

Participation is also widened in terms of providers of education, not in the sense of new groups being involved in the provision, but in that employers' organisations will have an influence over areas of the provision in a way that did not exist before these proposals. The rationale given for this widening of influence is not only that post-compulsory education needs to link more firmly to the world of paid work, but that employers and groups that represent their interests are best equipped to ensure that the reformed post-compulsory sector meets the needs of potential 'customers'. John Major's statement in the Foreword to the White Paper 'We want more choice' might suggest

that a 'one size fits all' approach to post-compulsory education is not desirable, and the emphasis on 'the market' might suggest that one of the objectives of this particular widening of participation is to deliver the choice that is spoken of.

#### 4.4.2 Adult Education

##### ***Inclusion***

This discursive formation articulates the primary mechanism for inclusion as participation in learning itself. Learning serves the 'educational, recreational and cultural needs of our population' (Fullick, 1991, p.403). Participation in learning enables people to develop their skills in relation to their role as citizens; their roles in family units, their understanding of health and the development of their cultural interests (Uden, 1991). These skills are articulated as essential in terms of inclusion in 'a thriving democratic society' (p.8).

Engagement in paid employment is not ignored in this articulation of inclusion. There is recognition of the role that paid employment plays, but at the same time there is an emphasis on how learning of all kinds might facilitate participation in learning related to developing skills for paid work.

What is problematic for the notion of inclusion as articulated within these discourses is that, if it is through participation in learning that individuals learn about the skills they need to be included in 'a thriving democratic society', then there needs to be mechanisms to persuade or encourage people to take part in learning. Those who are most likely to be excluded from 'a thriving democratic society' are also those that are least likely to be involved in learning. The dilemma here is how can policy initiatives

make participation in learning 'meaningful' to those people who are not already 'included'?

### ***Participation***

In the sense that this discursive formation relates to past systems for the delivery of post-compulsory education, in many ways the focus here is on increasing rather than widening participation. The context in which these statements are being articulated here, that is as a response to 'reform' that would undermine the aspects of learning that are valued within these discourses, could explain this emphasis. In a campaign such as described in this chapter it is understandable that the main focus would be on areas that could be considered successful rather than those that might weaken the argument. On the other hand, the underlying rationale for the articulation of learning within these discourses is one of widening participation.

What is suggested, in policy terms, is a widening of the systems for delivery of post compulsory education and a recognition that adults who have had a break from participating in learning since completing their initial education may encounter different barriers to participation than those continuing into post-compulsory learning after leaving school.

As outlined in section 4.3.3, in order to take into account other demands and responsibilities that the adult learner may have outside of their studies there would need to be a widening in terms of the mode of delivery of learning. This might include a greater emphasis on part-time courses and open learning.

The curricula would need to be widened to include all aspects of learning that motivate people to participate and the different levels of experience these learners have in terms of previous educational experience and acquired knowledge and skills that may not be related to 'formal' education.

A further barrier to participation is represented by the issue of how to make learning relevant to those potential learners who may, for whatever reason, feel that 'learning isn't for me'. I have discussed how one type of learning can be articulated as providing a 'stepping stone' into further learning i.e. 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' leading to 'education for adults'. The relevance of learning to non-participants might be established through adopting this 'stepping stone' approach in relation to the activities that people do participate in their everyday lives. This would involve developing programmes of learning that allow people to learn more about interests they already have or activities that they already do. At the same time 'learning' would need to be articulated in such a way as to move it away from the connotations often attached to the notion of 'education'. What might prove problematic, in light of the limitations always placed on government funding of policy initiatives, would be how to articulate this notion of 'learning' in a way that not only 'makes sense' to those potential learners the initiatives seek to engage, but to a range of people and groups engaged in the process of policy-making. 'Widening participation' in this context requires a willingness to participate in an articulation of 'learning' that is quite different from that usually articulated in relation to social welfare.

#### 4.4.3 Spaces for challenge

The spaces outlined below reflect the policy environment at the time in the sense that:

- whilst the discourses of 'education for adults' could be said to have been the 'dominant' discourses at this time the process of the implementation of the Further and Higher Education Bill (1992) still represents opportunities for challenging and resisting these discourses, and
- whilst the campaign against the proposals contained in the White Paper could be said to have been 'unsuccessful' in this instance, the process of policy-making has allowed for certain concerns to be placed on the policy agenda.

In identifying these spaces I focused on three inter-related questions:

1. What emerging 'spaces for challenge' were identified in the analysis presented in Section 5.3. above?
2. Given the policy environment that existed once the Further and Higher Education Act (1992) had been passed, what opportunities might remain to pursue these 'spaces for challenge'?
3. How do the implications for the notions of 'inclusion' and 'participation' outlined above affect the way in which these possible 'spaces for challenge' might be pursued?

### ***'Exceptions to the rule'***

Although the areas of provision that are to be funded for 'young people' and within 'education for adults' are similar in terms of their focus on vocational qualifications or progression into higher education, the difference between the two categories is provision that is designed to compensate for failures in the compulsory education system. There is a recognition that until these 'basic skills' are acquired further progression is not possible. These barriers to participation are recognised and the

funding of provision to overcome these barriers is legitimated. The space for challenge presented here is how to bring about a similar recognition of other barriers to participation that relate specifically to adults.

An example outlined in this chapter would be the way in which the 'leisure courses for the interests of adults' are articulated as providing a stepping stone into further learning.

***Influencing employers and organisations representing their interests.***

The Higher and Further Education Bill (England and Wales) (1992) ensures that employers and organisations representing their interests will have a greater influence over the provision of post-compulsory education. To suggest, however, that this presents no possible space for challenge is to assume that the interests of these parties are fixed and will be in opposition to, and separate from, those who seek to articulate a broad notion of learning.

In the proposals to incorporate a broad range of skills, specifically those that relate to the learner being self-monitoring and self-motivated as discussed in subsection 4.3.3, there is an articulation of the worker as requiring skills over and above those needed to carry out a specific job. The conceptual network on which the discourses of 'education for adults' draws, as articulated in the White Paper proposals, emphasises the need for a workforce that can support the flexible, competitive and innovative nature of the globalised economy. Although it could be argued that policies put in place to encourage the necessary approach to both 'skilling' and 'reskilling' could rely solely on sanctions to encourage participation in this type of learning, such policies could be expensive to

implement and could antagonise the potential learners they seek to engage. These outcomes would not necessarily be in the best interests of employers.

The possible space for challenge arising here relates to how learning might be rearticulated as an activity that can be both enjoyable and productive, and as providing a wide range of benefits that correspond to the interests of employers in some way. These might include 'softer' skills that relate broadly to activities in the workplace or to the role of learning in linking to issues such as health. As a result of the Bill such provision would now be firmly within the category of 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' and as such would not be eligible for central funding. The challenge would be to persuade employers' organisations that it is in their best interests to use their influence to overcome this distinction.

### ***Meeting the needs of 'customers'.***

The widening of participation by employers in terms of their involvement in the governance structures of the new post-compulsory sector and the assertion made in the White Paper that this involvement will assist providers in adopting a more business-like approach to the delivery of post-compulsory education, which were both discussed in subsection 4.3.3, provides another possible space for challenge.

For the increased involvement of employers to be successful in meeting the needs of customers, it could be argued that it is necessary for those needs to be better understood. As illustrated by the example of the report by NIACE (1991) 'Opening Colleges to Adult Learners', outlined in subsection 4.3.3, it is possible for practitioners/professionals working within post-compulsory education to make claims in terms of their expertise in this regard. It is possible for these claims to be made in



terms that engage the interests of employers, and at the same time link this concern with an articulation of post-compulsory education that extends beyond the economic rationale presented within the conceptual network of reform.

Whilst it might be possible to view the Government's claims that the aim of the proposals contained within the White Paper is to promote choice and opportunities for 'customers' with a degree of scepticism. It might also be the case that in articulating learning and learners in this way they have provided an opportunity which can be exploited.

***'a valuable social function'***

In my discussions of both the formation of objects and the formation of strategies in the previous section I outlined how recognition in the White Paper proposals that 'courses for the leisure interests' may, in certain circumstances, have a 'valuable social function' provided an opportunity for those involved in the campaign against the proposals to highlight the issues that concerned them.

The campaign group were able to continually press for clarification of this issue and to highlight the problems presented in terms of funding for this area of provision. As I have already pointed out, despite the best efforts of the Government to remove these issues from the policy agenda, they did not succeed in doing so. The space for challenge created here provides an opportunity for these issues to be kept on the agenda, and changes continue to be campaigned for in the newly reformed post-compulsory sector.

One of the outcomes of the campaign, and one which related specifically to this notion of learning as having 'a valuable social function', was that partnerships had been formed between a diverse range of organisations many of whom may not be thought of as being mainstream education providers. The engagement of this diverse range of organisations is important in relation to realising the objectives of a widening of participation that relies on being able to articulate learning as meaningful to a broad range of potential learners. Having been formed these partnerships could be built on and provide further opportunities to contest the narrow articulation of learning evident in the discourses of 'education for adults'.

## **Chapter Five: ‘Celebrating Adult Learning’: Adult Learners’**

### **Week 1992**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In Chapter 4 I discussed in detail the proposals contained in the White Paper 'Education and Training for the 21st Century' and the subsequent Further and Higher Education Bill. Whilst the planning for the first Adult Learners' Week took place against the backdrop of the campaign against these proposals, there was a broader context to development of the initiative.

One of the concerns of those involved in the campaign was that the introduction of the 1992 Bill would bring about cuts in funding to a wide range of adult learning provision, specifically provision that would now be classed as 'courses for the leisure interests of adults'. Even before this proposed legislation, however, funding for provision in this sector had always been subject to budget restrictions and changes in funding priorities.

Reflecting on the development of the Adult Learners' Week initiative, Jacqui Bufton, who in 1992 was head of Gloucestershire's Adult Continuing Education & Training service, states:

‘It really was a fight each year to defend adult learning..... the adult education share of the budget was cut almost every year. Maintaining it was a huge achievement. I had to make sure the leaders and members of all three political parties, on what was then a hung council, were kept aware of how adult education contributed to each of their parties' aims. It was exhausting!’ (NIACE, 2002, p.20)

Ensuring that those involved in funding post-compulsory education were 'kept aware' of the value and importance of this area of provision had been central to the work of NIACE since its formation.

In 1991 Martin Yarnitt attended the 'Outstanding Adult Learner Awards' in Washington USA, organised by the American Association for Adult and Continuing Learning, and on his return Yarnitt put a proposal to the NIACE Executive for a similar initiative to be developed in the UK. The purpose of the U.S. based initiative was to celebrate the achievements of existing adult learners, and to emphasise the diversity of their learning, with a view to encouraging others to participate. This same rationale can be seen in the development of the various Adult Learners' Week awards, and this again reflects one of the core aims of NIACE – that is to encourage 'more and different adult learners'<sup>10</sup>

The proposal for the Adult Learners' Week initiative, therefore, represented a new way of developing two of NIACE's core activities - the organisation's 'advocacy' role of engaging with those involved in policy making and implementation in the post-compulsory sector, and their 'promotional' role of engaging new learners. What I will emphasise in this chapter is the way in which the development of this first Adult Learners' Week was affected both by the policy context in which the initiative was developed and the interests and influences of NIACE as an organisation.

During our interview Alan Tuckett (Director, NIACE) outlined a number of aspects of NIACE's work that affected the way in which the first Adult Learners' Week was formulated. For example, through its connections with the Arts Council, the British Film Institute, ITV's Community Education Officers and the BBC's Education Advisory Board

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<sup>10</sup> The phrase 'more and different adult learners' is used in most of NIACE promotional materials when describing the organisation's aims and objectives.

NIACE had, 'always been intimately connected with broadcasters and broadcasting' (Tuckett, Interview, January 2004). In 1990 the statutory requirement for ITV companies to employ Community Education Officers<sup>11</sup> had been removed as part of the Communications Act (1990). The rationale for developing the Adult Learners' Week Awards based around the different ITV regions was to 'highlight the close links between community education officers in ITV and local education providers at a time when ITV franchises were being awarded' (NIACE, 1992, p.1). In addition to changes in policy, such as the Higher and Further Education Act (1992) and the Communications Act (1990), projects that were being developed within organisations that NIACE worked in partnership with also affected the format of ALW 1992. During 1991, representatives from BBC Education had been liaising with members of NIACE with regards to broadcasting a 'Second Chance' initiative, an initiative aimed at encouraging adults to 'return to learning'. Although the BBC had coordinated campaigns aimed at similar groups of viewers in the past, 'such a high-profile, intensive and expensive week of bi-media broadcasting had not been tried before' (BBC, 1994).

Describing how different aspects of the proposed ALW initiative came together, Alan Tuckett said:

"a' at our council meeting Martin (Yarnitt) reported back. 'b' we were having this conversation with ITV. And Naomi Sargant had just left Channel 4. She was an active member of NIACE. She absolutely insisted that it should be an adult *learners'* week so that the focus would be on learners. And when we were debating this Lucia Jones, who was the Education Officer at NIACE and who the BBC were negotiating with about the 'Second Chance' initiative, said "look here, we're doing this. We need to put all these initiatives together". And so Adult Learners' Week in a sense grows out of those strands.'

(Interview, Jan 2004).

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<sup>11</sup> Role - 'develop a dialogue with the communities served by their regional service, to identify appropriate education and social action programming, and then organise appropriate off-air activities to complement it locally' ( Tuckett, 1997,p.48)

In section 5.2 of this chapter I will outline the main events and activities that took place during ALW 1992, paying particular attention to the way in which the initiative 'grew out of these strands'.

In the final section of Chapter 4 I outlined the possible 'spaces for challenge' that I had identified in my analysis of the 1992 White Paper and the campaign against the proposed changes in post-compulsory education provision. In section 5.3. I will use the categories of these 'spaces for challenge' to discuss the way in which the events and activities which took place represent examples of a continuing process of resistance and negotiation. One of the purposes of my discussion at this stage will be to highlight aspects of this first Adult Learners' Week that are then built on and developed in future years. It is these aspects that I will draw on when outlining the framework that I will use in the subsequent three chapters.

In Section 5.4 of this chapter I will discuss this framework in greater detail, and I will link this discussion to issues relating to inclusion and participation. In the final section of Chapter 4 I discussed the articulations of 'inclusion' and 'participation' within the two formations of 'education for adults' and 'adult education', and linked this discussion to the central concerns of this thesis. I considered the implications of these articulations in terms of developing an approach to the provision of post-compulsory education that seeks to extend the notion of 'inclusion' beyond equality of opportunity brought about through engagement in paid employment, and which seeks to widen participation rather than simply increase it. I stated that in order to promote such an approach it would be necessary to articulate a notion of learning that would be 'meaningful' to those not currently participating, those who are not 'included', and also to persuade other groups involved in the process of policy making and implementation of the value

of this approach. The framework I will outline in this section will seek to capture and analyse attempts to achieve these aims throughout the history of the initiative, and in the context of the differing opportunities and constraints offered by the shifting policy environment.

In section 5.5 of this chapter, in order to contextualise the three chapters that follow, I will give a brief overview of the way in which the themes for the ALW initiative have developed since ALW 1992. The purpose of the ALW themes is to 'provoke discussion around certain aspects of adult learning and provide a focus for national events, conferences and research work. They were also used locally in the delivery of special events' (NIACE, 1994, p.10). As such these themes represent both the overarching issues and concerns that NIACE seeks to address through its advocacy and promotional work and, through the specific issues that are highlighted in the individual Adult Learners' Weeks, the policy developments that are effecting the provision of adult learning at that time.

## **5.2 Events and activities for Adult Learners' Week 1992**

In his contribution to the NIACE publication *'Reflections on Adult Learners' Week '*, celebrating ten years of the initiative, Martin Yarnit states:

'It's hard to remember that the first Week accompanied the introduction of the famous Schedule Two of the 1992 FE and HE Act which divested local authorities of control for colleges and polytechnics. NIACE and the Women's Institute banded together to run a spirited campaign against Schedule Two which won all the arguments but lost the battle with the Tories' ideological convictions' (NIACE, 2002, p.7).

Although the issue of whether or not the campaign 'won all the arguments' is debatable, this image of arguments being progressed at a different level from the overall 'battle' about provision links well to the concept of micromanipulation that I have highlighted throughout this thesis. In this section, in order to explore examples of this process, I will outline the main groups of events and activities that were organised as part of Adult Learners' Week 1992.

### **5.2.1 Awards and award ceremonies**

An awards ceremony was held in each of the ITV regions to celebrate 'Outstanding Adult Learners' (five finalists and an overall winner). The costs of the ceremonies were met by either the ITV franchise holder or regional Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs). The General Electric Company (GEC) met the cost of the certificates given to all learners nominated (over 1000 in total). Vouchers for learning materials were awarded to all finalists, the costs being met by GEC, The Independent Television Commission and NIACE. In addition to these vouchers, all of the regional winners were



offered free weekend places for residential short courses by the Adult Residential Colleges Association.

NIACE carried out the central planning and coordination of the awards process, with groups of practitioners, who were either members of NIACE or who NIACE had worked with in the past, being asked to form regional planning groups, which would be responsible for liaising with providers in their region. In the majority of regions the Community Education Officers (CEOs) of the ITV franchise holder organised the awards ceremonies, including the media coverage, in partnership with the regional planning groups. As already mentioned, maintaining the role of the CEO was no longer a statutory requirement for ITV franchise holders. At this time all the ITV regional franchises were also being reviewed, with each company having to bid to retain its franchise. In the review of ALW 1992 it is stated that 'NIACE is grateful for the commitment to learning which companies gave during these difficult times' (p.10). Whilst the new ALW initiative benefited from having such a high profile group of sponsors for these first awards, it could also be argued that the initiative gave the CEOs still in place an opportunity to promote the role that they played in relation to continuing education. The involvement of the current franchise-holders with ALW could be used to provide evidence of links to, and the ability to work in partnership with, other regional organisations.

The regional TECs were one group of organisations whose influence in the provision of post-compulsory education had been increased as a result of the 1992 Bill. In addition to sponsoring some of the awards ceremonies, 8 of the 10 regional planning groups had representatives from the regional TECs as members. In securing a major private company, GEC, as a co-sponsor for the awards NIACE built further connections between the ALW initiative and employers.

The original feasibility report that was produced by the Adult Learners' Week Working Group for the consideration of the NIACE Executive Committee highlighted the principle that the initiative should aim to 'strengthen the constituency – to give a voice to adult learners, teachers and organisers' (NIACE, 1991, p.1). The ALW awards for 'Outstanding Adult Learners' gave a 'voice' to adult learners in the sense that the stories of their learning experiences would be used in publicity materials, and in newspaper and other media reports, to promote the benefits of adult learning.

In their feasibility report the Working Group stated that they were 'convinced that adult learners' awards should be for individuals rather than centres' (NIACE, 1991, p.1). All of the practitioners that I interviewed during my project identified the ALW awards as being the most successful element of the initiative. They were valued in terms of the ways in which the stories could be used by practitioners to promote the services they offered, but at the same time many interviewees felt that the stories provided a validation of their practice. For example, after discussing some of the difficulties NIACE have encountered in coordinating and promoting the initiative, Kate Malone (Campaigns and Promotions Officer, NIACE) reflected 'What makes you carry on? It's just the stories. It's the learners actually. That's what makes you care'. In this sense the 'voice' of the learner could be said to be promoting participation not only by learners, but by practitioners.

On the other hand, the 'voice' of the learner is mediated by the nature of the initiative and the interests of the organisations involved. Whilst the Working Group agreed that the awards 'should highlight the diversity of adult learners, the diversity of the contexts in which they learn, and the difference in levels of study undertaken', it was also the case that it would be practitioners who would nominate learners for the awards. The

members of the regional selection panels for the awards, that is the people who would select the award winners, were chosen by the ALW regional planning groups. NIACE determined the eligibility criteria for nominees and the criteria that the regional panels should use to select award winners. These criteria were:

Nominees should demonstrate success in some of the following categories:

- have visibly improved their own life and/or the lives of others as a result of their learning experiences;
- have gained awards or certificates for learning achievement from institutions or community organisations or may also have been recognised by radio, television and the press;
- have maintained family, public, social or employment responsibilities at the same time as pursuing their learning goals;
- have overcome difficult circumstances in order to pursue learning;
- have displayed innovative approaches in meeting learning needs as an adult.

(NIACE, 1992, p.6)

During our interview Alan Tuckett referred to the award winners as 'emblematic winners', and he talked of the difficulty in selecting award winners from the groups of nominees. In the report on activities for ALW 1992 produced by the National ALW Advisory Group it was noted that 'throughout the entire planning process, a considerable amount of people commented on the awards being too competitive and individualistic' (NIACE, 1992, p.6). As a result of these comments, the next year saw the introduction of ALW awards for groups of learners in order to celebrate the achievements of learners who had, for example, 'visibly improved their own lives or the

lives of others as a result of collective learning experiences' (NIACE, 1993, p.7)<sup>12</sup>. Whilst the introduction of these awards might have gone some way towards making the selection of emblematic winners less individualistic, the competitive element still remains in the language of 'finalists' and 'winners'. During the project I was a member of the selection panel for the group awards in 2004 and the individual awards for 2004 and 2005, and issues relating to selecting emblematic winners were discussed at each of the selection panels I attended, and I will discuss these issues in further detail in subsequent chapters. What I want to highlight at this point is that whilst the objective of the awards is to celebrate the achievements of adult learners, the process of selecting 'emblematic winners' means that decisions had to be made in relation to the characteristics and qualities that these winners are meant to represent, and that these decisions were influenced by the values and concerns of the organisations and individuals involved in making them.

### 5.2.2 Parliamentary reception

Adult Learners' Week 1992 was launched with a reception in the Palace of Westminster hosted by Frank Haynes MP and NIACE on behalf of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Adult Education. The event 'was attended by some two dozen parliamentarians of all parties plus guests from education and broadcasting' (NIACE, 1992, p.18). Tim Eggar MP, then Minister of State for Education, attended the event. The launch of ALW on the 9<sup>th</sup> March came three days after the 1992 Bill had gained Royal Assent, and only four days after the announcement that a General Election would be held on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

Members of this Parliamentary Group had given support to the campaign against the 1992 White Paper in various ways, for example by raising questions in debates in the

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<sup>12</sup> For details of all ALW awards, see Appendix ?

Houses of Parliament and submitting written questions to Ministers. This support had been important in terms of gaining publicity on a national basis for the campaign, and therefore raising awareness of the concerns of those opposed to the proposals.

The Government was able to use a 'guillotine-motion' to ensure that the 1992 Bill completed the legislative process before the dissolution of Parliament in advance of the General Election. During the various committee stages and readings of the Bill, however, Members of Parliament, both in the Lords and the Commons, had been able to exert continuing pressure on the Government to consider changes to the proposals and to ask for clarification of issues relating to how the Bill would be implemented. The Parliamentary reception for ALW provided an opportunity for NIACE and others to continue to highlight issues of concern as the reforms brought about by the legislation began to be implemented.

### 5.2.3 National Conferences

During the week NIACE organised two national conferences - 'Adult Learning into the 21st Century': Meeting the Challenge<sup>13</sup>, which was sponsored by IBM UK, and 'Motivating Adults', which was sponsored by the Employment Department. In the sponsorship for these conferences the organisers of ALW had secured the support for the initiative of two groups that, potentially, would have influence on the implementation of the 1992 Bill. Given the focus on 'vocational' provision in the Bill and the increased influence of business in the governance of the post-compulsory sector, these conferences provided an opportunity to raise issues and concerns relating to the reformed system of provision.

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<sup>13</sup> The second volume of the White Paper, which had contained the proposals that dealt specifically with 'education for adults' was called 'Education and Training for the 21st Century: the challenge to colleges'.

In addition to sponsoring the conference, the Employment Department funded the provision of a free national 'helpline' during ALW. This helpline was advertised as part of the BBC's Second Chance campaign, which is discussed in the next sub-section. Securing the support of MPs and Ministers played an important part in both the campaign against the White Paper proposals and the launch of the ALW initiative, but relationships with senior members of the Civil Service were equally influential in terms of securing funding for events and activities. During our interview Alan Tuckett made the point that it was negotiations with Sir Geoffrey Holland, then Permanent Secretary of the Employment Department Group, that were crucial in terms of securing funding for both the helpline and the conference. Talking of the support given to ALW by Ministers Alan Tuckett said 'I think people make a difference and we've been blessed by a whole sequence of sympathetic ministers'. He also made the point, however, that 'perhaps the biggest time of risk is when somebody with a particular passion ... had to move on, then the Civil Service has a tendency to make things revert back to the norm'. In securing support for the ALW initiative from members of the Civil Service as well as Government ministers NIACE has been able to build relationships with an element of the infrastructure of government that remains relatively constant despite Cabinet 're-shuffles' and General Elections.

#### 5.2.4 National and Local Media Coverage

##### ***BBC - 'Second Chance' initiative***

The 'Second Chance' initiative comprised of programming on television (BBC 1 and 2) and radio (Radio 1, Radio 4 and Radio 5) with a free information booklet to support this programming.

The television programmes included:

- Fifteen 2 minute comedy sketches, repeated throughout the week, featuring different opportunities for adults to return to learning and starring actors from BBC programmes
- Five 15 minute documentaries profiling the personal stories of adults who returned to learning.

Radio programming included:

- A feature on women returning to learning on *Woman's Hour*
- A special edition of the programme *Education Matters* focusing on adult learning.
- A feature on assessment of prior learning on the *Learn to Earn* programme.
- A new three-part series on Radio 5 called *Up and Away* presented by Brian Blessed, which traced the steps of people who embarked on a new career in mid-life.

The BBC's local radio stations advertised the initiative and many of them linked these advertisements to their coverage of local Adult Learners' Week events.

I have already discussed the links between NIACE and BBC Education, but at this point I want to highlight the way in which initiative provided opportunities to build on already established relationships.

When discussing the links with the BBC initiative Alan Tuckett highlighted how 'the BBC education people had always had a struggle to get into prime-time'. Jonathon Powell, then Controller of BBC1, agreed to the comedy sketches being broadcast during the 'prime-time' period before and after programmes that attracted high

audience ratings. Describing how Jonathon Powell had become involved in promoting the initiative, Alan Tuckett talked of a 'teach-in' that he had been involved with in the 1980s, before he had taken a post at NIACE:

'I used to work in the 'Friends' Centre' in Brighton, a voluntary centre... dependent on an absolutely tiny grant from Sussex County Council. And the County Council decided that it didn't want to pay for 'tap-dancing on the rates'. And that they would not fund adult education... So we decided we would run a teach-in from Monday morning at 9 o'clock 'til Saturday night at 9 o'clock ... we would get people to offer one thing that they were passionate about, free. And to teach. And we would get sponsors for a penny an hour; 132 hours... Well it was just stunning... the media picked it up. We had about 13 visits from the 'Today' programme during the week. We were on about 30 TV programmes. People had heard about it on 'The World This Weekend' and had driven from the Orkneys to give support! People were going to classes, cleaning the floor, serving in the canteen. It was just stunning. And of course before the end of the week the leader of the Council said that he would change the policy.'

One of the people that Alan Tuckett had persuaded to present a session during the 'teach-in' was Jonathon Powell, at that time Head of BBC Drama, and whom he had known at university.

Describing the process of 'selling' the idea of prime-time scheduling for the 'Second Chance' comedy sketches, and the purpose of the initiative in general, to the BBC Alan Tuckett said 'In fact, we didn't need to sell it. Johnny (Jonathon Powell) was already absolutely convinced of its merit and value'.

The BBC programming was also used to publicise the free National Helpline. The National Helpline received nearly 57,000 calls (NIACE, 1992). The details of each caller were recorded in order for a copy of the 'Second Chance' booklet to be sent to



them and then, if they had specific queries, their calls were passed on to practitioners who could provide specific information and guidance. All of the calls were handled by volunteers from education guidance services, careers services or educational institutions.

### ***ITV***

In addition to the awards ceremonies many regional franchise holders ran features containing profiles of the award winners during their 'prime time' regional news programming. TV-am, then the main morning news programming on ITV, featured stories of adult learners throughout the week. The 'soap opera' *Coronation Street* carried a storyline relating to adult learning.

### ***Channel 4***

Another member of the ALW Working Group, the group that produced the original feasibility report for ALW, and of the ALW Advisory Group, the group that guided the planning and coordination of events for ALW 1992, was Naomi Sargent. Before moving to NIACE to take up the position of Honorary Research Fellow, she had been the Senior Commissioning Editor for educational programming at Channel 4.

Channel 4 broadcast two films that were linked to the week. The storyline of *Bluffing It* focused on how an adult who could not read or write managed to cope with everyday life and at the same time disguise his literacy problems. *Homer and his Pigeons* was a 'fictional documentary' (NIACE, 1992) about a retired miner and pigeon fancier who, through his access to his Miners' Institute Library, educated himself and passed on his 'love of learning' to others in his community. This broadcast was supported by a free booklet called 'Brainwaves' that listed inexpensive or free learning opportunities

available to adult learners. This booklet was written for Channel 4 by Alastair Thomson of NIACE.

The 'soap opera' *Brookside* introduced a storyline about adult literacy during the week. The producers of the programme issued a joint press release with NIACE promoting this storyline and the need for opportunities for learning throughout adult life.

#### 5.2.5 Local and regional events

In Appendix B I have reproduced the list of events and activities that NIACE highlights in its review of Adult Learners' Week 1992 (NIACE, 1992).

NIACE produced an 'organisers' toolkit' for practitioners that gave advice on aspects of adult learning that would be promoted during the week and how these promotions could be linked to local events and funding possibilities. The toolkit also gave advice on how to advertise and promote activities locally, including details of local press contacts. Advice given in the toolkit included how to highlight the 'human interest' aspect of stories and the importance of using celebrity contacts or 'stunts' in order to provide attractive photo opportunities. Many local radio stations and local newspapers gave coverage to the various events taking place.

In promoting and coordinating the events and activities for ALW 1992, NIACE made use of the partnerships that had been formed previously with other organisations and built on experience gained during the campaign against the 1992 Bill. From the brief outline above it is clear that, even at this early stage of the initiative's development, this was a complex project which engaged with a diverse range of education provision and people and organisations linked to this provision. In the next section I will explore how

the different elements of the initiative can be viewed as continuing to engage with the 'spaces for challenge' outlined in Chapter 5.

### **5.3 The 'spaces for challenge' - looking back and moving forwards**

In this section I will discuss how the events and activities of the first Adult Learners' Week provide examples of the continuing attempts to articulate arguments with regards to the value of certain types of learning that had been excluded from the new system of provision introduced through the 1992 Bill, and the need to engage with, rather than to marginalise, the particular requirements of adult learners.

#### **5.3.1 Exceptions to the rule**

One of the objections to the White Paper proposals had been that the types of provision contained within the category of 'education for adults' did not take into account the particular needs and requirements of adult learners. Whilst courses to assist adults with 'basic skills' and courses to assist adults with English as a second language would be part of the new system, it was argued that there was little recognition of other barriers to participation in learning that adults might face. The case was put forward that areas of provision that had been labelled as 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' were not only valuable in their own right, but were useful in terms of providing adults who had had negative experiences of compulsory education, or who had simply not taken part in formal learning for a period of time, with 'stepping stones' into further learning and, as such, this provision should not be excluded from the new funding arrangements being put in place.

The nomination criteria for ALW awards highlighted these possible barriers to participation. In particular the criterion of learners having 'maintained family, public, social or employment responsibilities at the same time as pursuing their learning goals' emphasised ways in which adult learners circumstances may vary from younger learners moving to post-compulsory education on completion of, or within a short time

of completing, their compulsory schooling. The criteria of having 'displayed innovative approaches in meeting learning needs as adults' and having 'overcome difficult circumstances in order to pursue learning' provide the opportunity to highlight the types of support and guidance that might prove helpful in overcoming barriers to participation.

Guidance to the selection panels asked that they select regional finalists and winners that reflected:

' the variety of major forms of adult learning (e.g. adult basic education, training, further/higher education, self-directed learning, return to learn programmes and evening classes...

the widest diversity of adult learners, taking into account gender, age, disability, ethnicity and geographical location'

(NIACE, 1992, p.7)

The diversity of these 'emblematic winners' meant that their stories had the potential, in terms of engaging other learners, to appeal to a wide variety of people from different backgrounds. At the same time, the combination of the criteria for nomination and the guidance on selecting winners, generated stories that provided a 'human interest' element, which was important in terms of attracting a wide range of coverage in different news media.

Programming such as the discussions on Woman's Hour and Education Matters represent what could be considered to be the 'conventional' way of both delivering information to potential learners and reinforcing arguments being put forward as part of a more overarching agenda. What might have been considered as less conventional at that time was the programming that sought to combine the entertainment aspect of television with the provision of information and guidance concerning post-compulsory education.

The fifteen 2 minute comedy sketches, the details of which are in Appendix C, that were shown as part of the 'Second Chance' initiative were designed to encourage adults to return to learning. Each of the sketches featured actors and comedians who would be well-known to many people from their appearances in BBC mainstream programming. Some of the storylines focused on the benefits of returning to learning in terms of the possibilities of gaining new employment or promotion in current employment. Other storylines addressed concerns and preconceptions that potential learners might have in relation to returning to learning. There was an emphasis on post-compulsory education as not being 'like school' and on learners being 'treated like grown-ups'. In terms of possible preconceptions of adult learning, storylines focused on, for example, adult education classes not just being in subjects like 'underwater basket weaving'. Particular characters from well-known television programmes, for example characters from *Birds of a Feather*, *Casualty*, *Eastenders* and *Lovejoy*, are used to highlight that adult learners come from very diverse backgrounds.

The primary aim of the comedy sketches, and indeed of all of the broadcasting linked to ALW, was to engage the interest of potential learners, and in attempting to engage this interest the sketches represented particular articulations of the value of a diverse range of learning, and what some of the barriers to participation in this learning might be. It is not within the scope of this thesis to assess the effectiveness of these particular broadcasts in terms of engaging new learners, but what I want to emphasise at this point is that the issues that had been raised during the campaign against the White Paper proposals, far from being pushed from the agenda, continue to be articulated. These articulations are represented in fora that might not be immediately associated with the formal policy-making process. During the campaign against the White Paper proposals those involved had made use of connections and partnerships

that they had established with other organisations and individuals in order to promote and gain support for their arguments, and in these examples we can see how that process is continued.

### 5.3.2 Meeting the needs of 'customers'

In another example of combining advice and guidance with entertainment programming, the storyline of the 'soap opera' *Brookside* and the Channel 4 film *'Faking it'* both emphasised how complex the process of engaging people with literacy problems could be. Throughout the campaign against the White Paper proposals the argument had been put forward that if colleges were going to be able to respond to the needs of their potential 'customers', as was the Government's stated aim, then there would need to be a better understanding of what those needs were, and that the expertise of those practitioners already working within the post-compulsory sector should be taken into account when systems of provision were being developed. During the campaign it had been argued that the emphasis on business interests and needs, both in the design of curricula and governance of education establishments, meant that the expertise of practitioners was being marginalised. In these particular examples of broadcasting it is possible to see a restatement of these claims both as to the nature of the problem and the resources needed to address it, and reinforcement of the expertise of education practitioners.

Another of the events for this first Adult Learners' Week that illustrates the way in which the notion of 'expertise' in meeting the needs of 'customers' was reinforced was the Parliamentary reception that launched the initiative. Guests at the reception watched previews of some of the BBC 'Second Chance' broadcasts and the Channel 4 booklet 'Brainwaves' was launched. At the reception it was also announced that Channel 4 had

commissioned NIACE to produce a paper 'on the importance of such back-up material to support learning through general programming' (NIACE, 1992, p.11).

The back-up material for BBC-led initiative, the 'Second Chance' booklet, again emphasised the diversity of both adult learning and adult learners. Alongside the information given about education and training available to help adults gain employment, improve their prospects within the job they have now, or change careers, there are details of how to access opportunities for learning for personal interest and community activities. The booklet also discusses issues like bad experiences of compulsory education and other anxieties about returning to learning. The booklet outlines a very broad notion of 'learning' and uses connections to skills that people will have learnt outside of formal programmes of learning during their adult lives to emphasise the point that 'adults make good learners'.

This first parliamentary reception 'set the scene' in terms of this particular event and in future years the reception was used to promote other initiatives, findings of research projects and other publications. In terms of the particular theme of the 1992 reception, i.e. the use of mainstream programming to engage adults in learning and the importance of back-up materials for that programming, this theme was not only to become one of the key aspects of the Adult Learners' Week initiative, but also developed an area of 'expertise' through which members of NIACE, and groups that they worked in partnership with, continued to attempt to influence policy in adult learning.

Another way in which claims relating to the expertise of practitioners were reinforced was through the provision of the free national helpline. Through the monitoring and



recording of the calls that were received it was possible to compile data to illustrate that the arguments that had been put forward with regards to the benefits of a range of education provision, and particular requirements of engaging adult learners, did appeal to the key groups of 'customers' that the newly formed post-compulsory sector was envisaged as serving.

### 5.3.3 Influencing employers and organisations representing their interests.

When analysing the possible 'spaces for challenge' in chapter 4 I discussed how, given the regulations put in place by the 1992 Bill, it would be important for those seeking to influence the way in which this legislation was implemented to engage with employers and organisations representing their interests. The two conferences that were held as part of Adult Learners' Week 1992 could be viewed as attempts to engage with these interests by providing expert advice from education practitioners and, at the same time, reinforcing the wider notion of learning promoted by Adult Learners' Week.

The conference 'Adult Learning into the 21st Century': Meeting the Challenge' included speakers representing 'business interests' such as Professor Charles Handy of the London Business School and Sir Anthony Cleaver, Chief Executive of IBM. Other delegates represented a range of education providers that could be viewed as representing, in the main, the areas linked most strongly with vocational or work-related education and training.

The format of the second conference, 'Motivating Adult Learners', was different from the first in that, although there were 'keynote' speakers, the majority of the conference was conducted in workshops 'within which expert presenters outlined and discussed developments and research at the leading edge of policy and practice in this field'

(NIACE, 1992, p.19). One such research project was a survey commissioned by the Employment Department on the subject of participation in post-compulsory education by adults from ethnic minority groups.

#### 5.3.4 A valuable social function

The final 'space for challenge' discussed in the previous chapter related to the way in which the campaign against the White Paper proposals had been successful in terms of promoting the 'valuable social function' of a whole range of learning provision and contesting the distinctions that the Government had made that meant that such provision would not be centrally funded. Many of the regional and local events and activities organised for this first Adult Learners' Week continued to stress the importance of these areas of provision and provide evidence of that 'valuable social function' and in doing so provided examples of case studies that NIACE could use to continue to promote this aspect of education provision.

The organisers' toolkit provided by NIACE drew on the experience NIACE had gained in relation to making use of the media to promote their activities, and these strategies had been developed further during the campaign against the White Paper proposals, ensuring that the campaign gained considerable media coverage. In linking regional and local activities with a national campaign, organisers, especially those involved in providing learning that would now be part of the 'Non-schedule two' sector, had access to publicity and promotion that they would be unlikely to have been able to fund themselves. Likewise, in ensuring that the ALW awards were organised on a regional basis and reflected a variety of learning provision, NIACE had compiled an additional resource that providers could use to promote their activities.

Criteria for selection, such as learners having had their achievements recognised by community organisations; that nominees should have 'visibly improved their own lives and/or the lives of others as a result of their learning experiences'; and, have played a part in supporting other learners, gave nominators and selection panels the opportunity to highlight aspects of learning that were not focused solely on gaining skills and qualifications linked to participation in paid employment.

In this section I have outlined how the themes of Adult Learners' Week 1992 relate to the possible 'spaces for challenge' that I identified as a result of my analysis presented in Chapter 4. I have identified examples that illustrate how practitioners continued to argue that the needs of adult learners are such that they cannot be met effectively within the constraints imposed by the newly formed post-compulsory system and that there needs to be allowances made for 'the exceptions to the rule'. I have explored how events held during ALW provided opportunities to promote a particular approach to 'meeting the needs of customers', an approach that should be informed by the expertise of education practitioners, and I have discussed how these events attempted to engage and influence organisations that would be potentially influential in the implementation of the reforms introduced through the 1992 Bill. I have shown how the initiative continued to promote the 'valuable social function' of a diverse range of learning, and thus maintain the question of how this provision should be funded as part of the policy agenda. I will now turn my attention to the framework I will use in the next three chapters to explore how these 'spaces for challenge' have been built on and developed in future years.

## **5.4 Exploring the connections**

Since the ALW initiative was introduced in 1992 there have been many policy changes relating specifically to the post-compulsory education sector, but also more generally to systems for formulating social policy and for its implementation. The framework that I outline in this section builds on the analysis carried out in Chapter 4 and the earlier sections of this chapter. In the 'Commentary' for this part of my thesis I highlighted the difficulties I had had in summarising the results of my data analysis. In discussing the way in which the events and activities for ALW were developed and the way in which these events and activities can be viewed as attempts to engage with possible 'spaces for challenge' my focus was on the processes of micromanipulation – the processes whereby marginalised groups develop unique ways of raising problems and influencing any agenda.

The 'agenda' in question here was the promotion of a notion of learning that was 'inclusive', both in the sense of its purpose being extended beyond preparation for, or advancement in, 'the world of work', and in the sense that it attempts to encourage engagement in learning through widening participation. In our interview Alan Tuckett described the 'agenda' thus:

'It's the nature of the beast that some groups are always going to be underrepresented and the focus of widening participation policy is to correct the imbalance that is there in the education and training system ... So who isn't there is the key issue for widening participation, and the pattern in the system is to privilege the relatively privileged and to marginalise the relatively marginalised. A widening participation policy notices that, *and tries to do something about it.*'

(emphasis added)

The framework that I will outline below draws together these examples of micromanipulation into four broad strands. I will use this framework to capture both the continuities between the annual presentations of the ALW initiative and the ways in which the initiative has developed in the shifting policy environment.

The partnership between broadcasters and NIACE influenced greatly the way in which the events and activities for ALW 1992 were developed. In terms of NIACE's promotional role, this partnership with broadcasters enabled NIACE to promote the benefits of learning to a wide range of adults, many of whom would be difficult to engage through more 'traditional' approaches.

Reflecting on the way in which creative links can be formed between people working in the media and education practitioners, Alan Tuckett (1997) states 'their interests are not exactly the same: their language and priorities differ. However, by learning enough of each others' needs it is possible to extend access to learning for large numbers of people currently excluded' (p.53). The first strand of the framework that I will use to explore examples of the way in which ALW has developed will focus on the way in which these creative links with the media continue to develop. I will extend this strand to include the way in which similar links are established with other organisations whose primary purpose may not be education provision, but whose needs and interests coincide with the wider notion of 'learning' promoted by Adult Learners' Week. I will emphasise how forming these links not only engages new groups of potential learners, but also provides access to additional funding streams and sources of support.

For ALW 1992 these additional sources of support proved important in relation to continuing to engage with, and attempting to influence, mainstream education policy

developments. For example, the parliamentary reception for the launch of ALW 1992 was an example of how NIACE continued to lobby MPs and Ministers with regards to the concerns and issues raised by the reforms contained in the 1992 Bill. At the same time, using the parliamentary reception to launch the 'Second Chance' and 'Brainwaves' information booklets not only provided an additional opportunity to reinforce the arguments that had been made, but also to demonstrate the support of other groups for these arguments. It also meant that the cost of this aspect of the advocacy element of ALW was met by those other groups. The second strand of the framework I will use to explore the way in which the ALW initiative has developed will focus on how the initiative has been used to engage with mainstream education policy developments, but will also emphasise how those involved in coordinating and promoting the initiative make use of the support of organisations outside of mainstream education provision within more traditional fora of policy-making.

In the same way as the 1992 Bill increased the influence in the provision of adult learning of employers and groups representing their interests, subsequent legislation and other social policy developments increased the influence of other groups and organisations. For example, and as discussed in Chapter 2, voluntary organisations and charities have increasingly become involved in the both the provision of learning programmes and the policy-making process. Government departments, other than the Department for Education, have also had varying degrees of influence over the development of post-compulsory education policy. In relation to the 1992 initiative I highlighted how partnerships with the Employment Department influenced events and activities that took place. Discussing the way in which ALW has been used as a vehicle to engage the support of various Government departments, especially in light of the development of the SEU with its cross-departmental brief, Alan Tuckett said:

'The government department most committed to learning is the Department of Health, not the Department of Education. It's through the National Health Service and the NHSU that there are masses of opportunities to make the Week a site for creative learning by people.... and the same things are there around the agendas. DWP<sup>14</sup> and the pensions crisis. The financial dimensions. People making decisions about their futures. What happens in an ageing society. The richness of adult learning is that it engages with the complexities, difficulties and challenges of adult life doesn't it?'

The third strand of the framework will explore examples of the way in which the Adult Learners' Week initiative continues to engage with and influence the interests of not only employers, but other groups or organisations who gain influence due to developments and changes in the policy agenda. This role is often described within NIACE documents as acting as a 'critical friend'.

A further aspect of my discussion of ALW 1992 reflected the importance of the relationship between the events and activities that are organised on a national basis and those organised in the regions, and the mutual benefits of this relationship. In 1992, and in light of the changes brought about by the 1992 Bill, the providers that had a particular interest in being linked to ALW were those who would now form part of 'non-schedule 2' provision. The requirements of different funding systems that have been introduced over the years have meant that it has always been more difficult to secure funding for some areas of provision than others. These requirements have also meant that it is difficult for providers to make available resources to promote an initiative like Adult Learners' Week where the focus is often on the long-term benefits of engaging with potential learners. As Kate Malone stated during our interview in May 2003:

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<sup>14</sup> Department of Work and Pensions

'It's not about getting bums on seats, that's an added extra, that's great if you do that. But it's actually about giving people an opportunity to try something out. It may be two, three years later before they sign up to something. So it's not about handing your prospectus out and giving the dry information. It's about actually making people think it's something that's fun, it's enjoyable, it's something they will do and they'll find out about. So it's turning people on in a sense...'

Even when providers are willing and able to commit resources to activities for the week the evaluation and audit trails that often form part of the funding requirements can limit the nature of the activities that can be organised. Again these constraints were discussed in my interview with Kate Malone:

'Because funding at times can stifle some of the creativity. The filling in forms and tick boxes and having to meet specific targets.....it's a motivational campaign ...where you have the kind of benefits that are not numbers. But if you can't tick the boxes then you don't get the funding.'

The fourth strand of the framework will explore examples of the relationship between the national and regional/local aspects of ALW. I will also highlight examples of the way in which the particular articulations of inclusion and participation represented by the Adult Learners' Week initiative continue to engage practitioners who, through their involvement in the initiative, find innovative ways to overcome the constraints imposed by certain requirements of different sources of funding.



## **5.5 Evolving themes**

Over the years the degree to which the themes are focused on distinct issues has changed. In 1993 and 1994 the themes focused on three specific areas each year:

- 1993 - Women and learning opportunities; Guidance in education and training; Learning in later life, linked to European year of older people and solidarity between generations.
- 1994 - Learning and the workplace; Consuming passions: learning for its own sake; Social exclusion: From the margins to the mainstream.

In the same way that the events and activities of the first Adult Learners' Week could be viewed as a response to the debates raised in relation to the 1992 White Paper and Bill, the themes of the first years of the initiative reflect the changes in provision as the legislation is implemented.

For example the themes of 'women and learning opportunities' and 'learning and the workplace' were linked, through conferences held and research published during Adult Learners' Week, to the revised National Targets for Education and Training, which were to be used by Government as a way of monitoring the performance of the new FEFC. The conferences and research addressed issues that related to the specific needs and requirements of the groups of adult learners that, it had been argued, were not best served by the proposals of the White Paper.

The 1992 Bill had introduced changes to the Careers Advisory Service and the 1993 Employment Rights Act brought further revisions. The theme 'guidance in education

and training' was designed to 'ensure that support for adult-based guidance is retained as a wider range of partnerships is created' (NIACE, 1993, p.5).

The 'Consuming Passions' theme was used to promote the importance of 'non-Schedule 2' provision - the types of learning that had been originally designated 'courses for the leisure interests of adults'. The Arts Council, in partnership with NIACE, provided a number of grants to support events around the country.

The themes that linked the European year of older people and solidarity between the generations in 1993 and Social exclusion, the new European Union Programme, in 1994 illustrate the growing relationship between European Union governmental organisations and NIACE.

Talking in 2004 of the relationship between the 'celebratory' and 'advocacy' aspects of Adult Learners' Week, Alan Tuckett said that in more recent years 'we have focused on that as an alternative to a sharper critical edge in the advocacy role, more celebration. But I think that's going to go in waves because inevitably there are times when you have to ratchet up'. The themes in these early years of the initiative provide good examples of this 'ratcheting up' of the advocacy aspect.

Reflecting on development of the initiative in the years immediately after the implementation of the 1992 Bill, Martin Yarnitt states 'by 1994 ministerial statements during Adult Learners' Week about the value of non-vocational routes to qualifications were effectively conceding the error' (NIACE, 2002, p.7).

In his keynote speech at the 'Learning for its own sake' seminar in 1993, Tim Boswell (Minister of State for Education) said 'as you may imagine, I would be the last person to want to disparage the incentive provided by career or employment prospects', but he also said that the Government recognised the importance of learning for its own sake, which he described as:

'the pursuit of knowledge which does not necessarily stem from a clear cut motivation, such as gaining employment or getting a better job; learning which may not even have an obvious end product such as a qualification; learning which people embark on purely for the enjoyment and satisfaction they gain from what they are doing'

He also supported the notion that this type of learning could act as a stepping stone to further participation:

'initial motives change as new opportunities open up. Once they have taken the plunge, many adults quickly recognise how much they are enjoying the learning process.....they go on to take up more formal education and training which they would never have dreamt of undertaking otherwise'.

(p. 1-3).

At the 1994 Awards Ceremony, the Minister again spoke of the motivations of adults to participate in learning and also addressed the issue of the negative impact that experiences of compulsory education may have on adults' attitudes to participation. He also comments that:

'Traditionally, adult learning has not, I believe, enjoyed the attention it deserves in this country. I believe that is changing. NIACE must take a good deal of the credit for pushing it up the public agenda. And one of the indisputable benefits of the Government's recent reforms has surely been to turn the spotlight on adult learning.'

(p.2)

As the initiative became increasingly successful in terms of a tool for 'pushing issues up the public agenda' the themes for Adult Learners' Week became more diverse and included a broader range of issues. As a result the initiative now comprises five overarching themes, which are the same each year, and these themes are used to highlight the key areas or issues that are particularly relevant in terms of the policy environment of the time.

These five overarching themes are:

- Community, culture and citizenship
- Equality and diversity
- Skills for life
- Learning and health
- Learning in a global context

In the next three chapters I will discuss some of the ways in which the first three of these overarching themes have been linked to activities and events relating to Adult Learners' Week, and in turn how these link to key policy areas. As I outlined earlier, in addition to data collected from the NIACE archives and interviews with members of NIACE who are involved with coordinating ALW at the national level, I will use data collected in a number of other settings in the lead up to, and during, ALW 2003 and 2004. Given the constraints of this research project it was not possible to engage in all the activities that have been linked to the ALW initiative. The first three ALW themes are the broadest and they provide the greatest opportunities for linking activities in a number of different educational settings. As such, the majority of data collected relates to these first three themes.

There is, however, a degree of overlap between the issues highlighted by the 'learning and health' theme and those relating to the themes of 'community, culture and citizenship' and 'equality and diversity'. For example, the 'equality and diversity' theme has been used to highlight issues relating to learning provision for older learners, and one of the arguments put forward to support encouraging participation by older learners has been the health benefits of learning in later life. Similarly, case studies highlighted within the 'community, culture and citizenship' theme, with its focus on informal learning in community settings, have often emphasised the benefits, both in terms of physical and mental health, for learners participating in these projects. Where these connections between the themes exist, I will highlight them in my discussion.

It is suggested that organisers of events for ALW use the theme of 'learning in a global context' to 'encourage learners and potential learners to engage in events about sustainability, North/South issues, migration, fair trade, the environment and other 'global' issues'. Whilst some projects highlighted in the ALW literature discuss the way in which this theme has been used in organising local events, the use of this theme was not evident in any of the other data collected, and, as such, I have not been able to explore any issues relating to this theme in my analysis.

## **5.6 Summary and Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter has been to outline the various stands that form the background to the development of ALW 1992, and to highlight how the ALW initiative 'grew out of these strands'. In doing so I have discussed how the initiative was influenced not only by the policy context in which it was developed, but the interests and concerns of NIACE as an organisation and the way in which these are reflected in the partnerships that were formed.

In focusing on the different events and activities that took place during ALW I have considered how these partnerships shaped the format of the initiative. I have also highlighted the way in which these events and activities were built on in the first few years. I have related these events and activities to the 'spaces for challenge' identified in the previous chapter in order to illustrate how the issues and concerns raised during the campaign against the 1991 White Paper proposals continue to be articulated in a policy environment shaped by the implementation of those policy proposals. I have emphasised how, despite the constraints imposed by this restructuring of the post-compulsory sector, practitioners continued to find ways of promoting a notion of learning that articulates the value of learning as being something more than preparation for, or involvement, in 'the world of work'. In doing so their aim is to celebrate the achievements of adult learners but also to make the notion of learning 'meaningful' to those not already participating, and therefore to widen participation.

In continuing to engage with these 'spaces for challenge', those involved in the initiative also seek to address other barriers to participation by influencing the actions of those groups involved in policy making and implementation. I have described how the themes

for ALW have developed, and how these themes reflect the policy agenda that the initiative seeks to influence.

I have argued that the events and activities that I have discussed in this chapter represent examples of ‘micro-manipulation’ – ways of progressing the arguments even when the overall ‘battle’ might appear to be lost. In bringing these examples of micro-manipulation together into four broad strands I have developed a framework with which I can explore the continuities of these engagements with the ‘spaces for challenge’, but also capture the way in which they have evolved to reflect the changing policy environment.

## **Chapter Six: Community, culture and citizenship**

### **Section 6.1 Introduction**

NIACE's newsletter for practitioners, *Discover*, explains the rationale for the theme of 'Community, culture and citizenship' as:

'Much informal learning takes place in community or non-traditional settings ... all of which can offer learning opportunities that are accessible and relevant to local people and which build upon the strength of what is already happening'

(NIACE Campaigns and Promotions Group, 2003, p.4)

The inclusion of both 'informal learning' and 'community or non-traditional settings' means that this is the broadest of the overarching themes and it provides possibly the most varied opportunities for regional/local organisers to link their events to Adult Learners' Week.

After the implementation of the 1992 Bill, much of the learning that might have been linked to this thread would have come under the category of 'Non-schedule 2' provision, and as such, in the early years of ALW this provision would have been difficult to fund. Local authorities still had a statutory duty to ensure 'adequate' provision, but judgments about what was considered 'adequate' varied across local authorities. There was also the expectation that funding for such provision would not come entirely from local authorities, rather practitioners should try to access other funding streams or meet part of the costs by charging fees.

The General Election on May 1st 1997 saw the Labour Party elected to government with a 179-seat overall majority. The first 'keynote' speech by the newly-appointed Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett, was delivered at the launch of ALW 1997. At the launch event for ALW a new scheme of Individual Learning



Accounts (ILAs) was announced<sup>15</sup>, providing funding that the learner could use for 'informal' learning programmes should they wish to. The formation of a National Advisory Group on Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning (NAGCELL) was also announced, with Alan Tuckett appointed as Vice-Chair. NAGCELL's initial terms of reference were:

'To advise the Secretary of State on matters concerning adult learning as required, and with a particular reference to extending the inclusion in lifelong and work-based learning to those groups and individuals whose increased participation will contribute to improvements in employability, regeneration, capacity building, economic efficiency, social cohesion, independent living and citizenship generally..'

(NAGCELL, 1997, Appendix A)

One of the specific policy areas that NAGCELL was asked to advise on was the development of a Green Paper on 'lifelong learning'. This Green Paper, 'The Learning Age: A Renaissance for a New Britain' (DFEE, 1998) began the process that was to dismantle the system of FEFCs and bring to an end the categorisations of Schedule 2 / Non-Schedule 2 provision.

NIACE's official response to the Green Paper was, on the whole, positive. The response did however signal a note of caution. The response welcomed:

'the breadth and generosity of vision in *The Learning Age* and, in particular, David Blunkett's foreword in which he recognises that 'as well as securing our

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<sup>15</sup> This scheme, which was to be funded by redirecting funds that had originally been allocated to TECs, allowed individuals to choose what type of learning they wished to undertake from a broad range of providers, including those providers supplying 'informal' learning programmes. The first million learners to open an account had to 'invest' a minimum fee of £25 and the balance of the funding, up to a limit of £150 could be claimed back by the provider from central government funds. Other incentive schemes, usually aimed at specific types of learning, were also available under the ILA scheme. Following advice from the police, the scheme was shut down with immediate effect on the 23rd of November 2001 due to allegations of potentially serious fraud and abuse.

economic future, learning has a wider contribution. It helps make ours a civilised society, develops the spiritual side of our lives and promotes active citizenship.'

(NIACE, 1998, p.1)

At the same time the NIACE response stated that the Government had not provided sufficient detail in terms 'how its Grand Design would work' (p.2). The response pointed out, for example, that:

'Whilst the paper explores welcome practical steps to be taken to raise standards of achievement, and to revitalise Britain's skills, it has little to say in detail about how learning that fosters citizenship, or respects and celebrates cultural diversity can be developed.

(p.2)

The White Paper that followed in 1999 'Learning to Succeed: a new framework for post-16 learning' (DFEE, 1999) did contain further details of the proposed changes to the post-compulsory sector, including details of the creation of Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) to replace the FEFCs. The LSCs were to retain the national/local structure of FEFCs, but there were significant changes in the remit of the LSCs in relation to 'informal' learning. The National LSC was to have a statutory duty to 'ensure adequate and sufficient adult and community provision' (p. 64). As discussed in Chapter 5, since the implementation of the 1992 Bill local authorities had received central Government funding for the provision of Non-Schedule 2 learning only as part of their block grant. The White Paper proposed that this element of the block grant would now be transferred to the National LSC, and that the LSC were to 'ensure that a substantial part of the available resource is directed to provision arranged by local authorities'. Local LSCs were to direct funding towards plans for provision drawn up by 'local Learning Partnerships'. Membership of these Learning Partnerships would

include providers from all areas of post-compulsory education, including those providing 'informal' and community-based learning.

Again, whilst welcoming these changes to the funding of adult learning, NIACE voiced concern over some remaining issues as the Learning and Skills Act (2000) began its progress through the legislative process. One of the key concerns was that although:

'the policy steers in the Prospectus (for the formation of the LSCs), and the transitional arrangements suggested, augur well for adult learners in the short-term..... for community-based adult learning, however, it is not clear what protections the proposals contain for provision should different policy priorities prevail'.

(NIACE, 2000, p.4)

Another concern was that whilst the provision of non-accredited 'informal' learning, in this case learning programmes that did not lead to the 'approved' qualifications listed in the Act, was included within the LSC's remit, it was still the case that this provision would need to meet certain criteria in order to qualify for funding. What these criteria were to be, and how learning provision would be assessed in terms of their eligibility for funding, had yet to be decided.

The Learning and Skills Act (2000) received Royal Assent on July 28<sup>th</sup> 2000. In one sense the planning for ALW 2001 took place in a very different policy environment from that in which the first ALW was developed. Some issues and concerns relating to the provision of informal learning in non-traditional settings, however, remained the same. Whilst there would be access to central Government funding streams, providers would have to compete for those funds in a policy environment where funding priorities were subject to change. It was important, therefore, that the ALW initiative continued to highlight the value of informal learning. At the same time, the way in which informal

learning would be assessed as being eligible for funding had not been clearly defined in the legislation. During 2001/2002 there was a period of consultation on the proposals contained within the LSC's Draft Corporate Plan, and once again the NIACE's responses to the consultation document reflected the issues that were highlighted during ALW and the success of approaches to informal learning that were celebrated during the Week. Once the period of transition was completed, and the new systems for funding and evaluation of provision were in place ALW become a vehicle through which NIACE and its partners could provide advice and guidance on how to make best use of the new funding system, and at the same time raise any continuing issues and concerns.

As discussed previously, arguments as to the value of informal learning that takes place in community or 'non-traditional' setting usually focus on two issues. Firstly, it is argued, informal learning is valuable 'for its own sake' and, secondly, that it can act as a 'stepping stone' to participation in further learning. In the sections that follow I will discuss how events and activities linked to the 'community, culture and citizenship' theme highlight both of these issues.

In section 6.2. I will explore the way in which small project funding made available through the ALW initiative has been used to promote informal learning. I will discuss how such funding provided opportunities to build on-going partnerships, and I will draw on my involvement with a local Learning Partnership to illustrate how these partnerships can provide access to further resources.

In section 6.3. I will explore the way informal learning in the workplace is promoted through 'Learning at Work Day', which has been held on the Thursday of ALW since 1997. In terms of informal learning, that is to say learning *at* work rather than learning

for work, the workplace could be considered a 'non-traditional' setting. Events and activities organised for 'Learning at Work Day' have been used to highlight the way in which informal learning helps learners acquire what are often referred to as 'soft skills' or 'transferable skills' - skills relating to, for example, communication, problem solving, flexibility, willingness to learn and assertiveness. In this section I will discuss how these ALW events have been used to enhance the case put forward by NIACE that the Government's recent 'Skills Strategy' should take account of the benefits informal learning can bring.

In section 6.4 I will outline the ways in which the 'community, culture and citizenship theme' has been linked to events that emphasise learning 'for fun' and 'for pleasure', and in particular how these events seek to widen participation by engaging with people through their existing hobbies and interests. I will consider the difficulties that arise in funding these events in a policy environment that stresses the measurement of 'learning outcomes'. I will discuss how these events provide opportunities for promotion in terms of engaging media resources, but I will also highlight the possible pitfalls of promoting learning as something that is done 'for fun'. In order to illustrate how events based around people's hobbies and interests can be used to engage a number of policy concerns and issues, I will discuss one particular project, 'Life, leeks and lilies', in more detail. Finally in this section, I will draw on my observations as a member of the ALW Group Awards Panel to discuss further the issue of 'emblematic winners'. I will consider how the 'voices' of these learners are used as vehicles to not only engage new learners, but also to enhance the advocacy role of the ALW initiative.

In section 6.5, in order to summarise and conclude this chapter, I will discuss how the examples discussed in this chapter relate to the framework for the analysis that I outlined in the previous chapter.

## **6.2 Small grant funding**

Linking activities to what is now called the 'community, culture and citizenship' theme has provided practitioners with the opportunity to access small grants in a number of different ways. For example, in the early years before this broad theme was developed, themes were introduced that were designed to 'reaffirm and highlight the importance of learning for fun or purely for pleasure' (NIACE, 1994, p.11). In 1994 the Arts Council provided small grants for activities linked to the 'Consuming Passions' theme, and in 1995 a number of other organisations joined the Arts Council in providing grants for activities linked to the 'Performing Passions' theme.

By 1998, the year in which the UK Government held the Presidency of the European Union, small grant funding from the ESF, The Arts Council, GEC and the QCA for activities amounted to £30,000 (NIACE, 1998, p.8). Rather than being aimed at a specific theme, as was the case in the examples above, this small grant funding was made available for a number of different informal and community learning activities.

Whilst these types of small grants cannot in themselves make a difference in terms of overall funding they do provide other opportunities. Firstly, there is the chance to use these funds as 'seed money' to attract further more permanent funding for provision of informal learning, but the grants can also be used to promote events taking place within ALW that provide opportunities to build on-going partnerships.

In 2004, during the run-up to ALW, I observed the planning meetings of a county-based Learning Partnership which received funding via ALW. A decision had been taken earlier in the year by this Learning Partnership that, because only limited funding for campaigns and promotions was available, their engagement in ALW would comprise of nominations for the ALW Awards and a small number of events, which would be

organised by individual providers. The Learning Partnership itself would focus its funding on a large recruitment event to be staged in July. The event in July would focus mainly on the learning available from the larger providers, the majority of their provision being focused on formal learning in traditional settings.

A grant from NIACE meant that the Learning Partnership could plan events during the Week which involved the smaller providers, who were often involved in informal learning. As the planning for ALW progressed, and the range of activities being presented were discussed at meetings, there was a 'snowball effect' in terms of partnerships being formed to run joint events, with partial funding coming from other sources.

#### 6.2.1 Cultural Diversity Day

The Learning Partnership decided some of the grant money would be directed at funding activities linked to 'Cultural Diversity Day', which is held on the first Saturday of ALW. 'Cultural Diversity Day' was introduced in 2002 'to give providers the opportunity to widen participation and be responsive to the needs of the wider community, making it a learning journey for both the providers and the learners' (NIACE, 2005, p.1).

One of the members of the Learning Partnership is Aimhigher, the organisation that promotes access to higher education and whose funding is linked to the Government's participation targets for higher education<sup>16</sup>. In this particular county one of the areas considered to be a priority by Aimhigher is outreach work with members of ethnic minority communities. Contacts that were made between Aimhigher and informal learning providers that work within these communities meant that a number of activities

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<sup>16</sup> Target: By 2010 50% of 18 30 year olds should have had the opportunity to benefit from participation in higher education.

could be linked in the one event, which was held on the campus of a local university. Aimhigher negotiated for the use of the campus for the event and provided an additional funding stream, which went towards the total cost of the event. Aimhigher were able to promote their objectives during the event and make contact with 'targeted groups', whilst other providers could organise displays and activities linked to their learning provision. Using the university as the venue for the event, and being able to provide free transport to the event, meant that attendees were able to look around this 'traditional' setting in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere.

An example of how the objectives of these different organisations were met was that Aimhigher provided the funding for the refreshments, including lunch, for everyone attending the event. The lunch was prepared by a member of the Black Practitioners and Learners Network, who also gave cookery demonstrations on how to buy and prepare food on a limited budget. The dishes for the demonstrations and the lunch were designed to meet special dietary requirements of different ethnic minority groups.

As part of the access arrangement I had negotiated with the Learning Partnership I was involved in completing evaluation forms with attendees at the event. Nearly all of those who attended had heard about the event via organisations involved in community-based learning, and some of the attendees were people who had been nominated for ALW Group awards in the past. Many attendees came as nominated representatives of certain community groups, whilst others brought family members. The motivations that they gave for attending the event varied from wanting to get information about different learning opportunities which they could feed back to their communities, whilst others who were already involved in informal learning wanted to look into opportunities to progress into higher education for themselves or encourage other family members, usually young adults, to take up learning opportunities.



The evaluation forms for this event were designed to meet the criteria of the funding audit trail required by Aimhigher, but also the evaluation data required by NIACE to evidence continuing core funding for ALW. The event could be considered 'successful' in the sense that required feedback was collected. What this system of evaluation failed to capture, however, is the way in which the partnership for this event was formed, and the way in which previous relationships between providers and groups of learners proved essential in terms of engaging interest in the event. As discussed in Chapter 2, one of the outcomes of the Government's focus on 'systematic evaluation' of initiatives in order to inform 'evidence-based' policy has been that evaluation has tended to focus on 'counting what works' rather than gaining an understanding of what made the initiative 'work'.

During an interview with the Development Officer of the local branch of the Aimhigher initiative the interviewee spoke of how forming partnerships with other learning providers was essential in terms of meeting the objectives that they had been set:

'Obviously we have our main focus here... the objectives of Aimhigher, but if those are achieved by forming partnerships with other ...well, different organisations, and if that helps them out...well that's for the better isn't it? And the sector isn't coherent. It's difficult to make the connections that you need to make. Especially in my area of responsibility, adult and community learning. So *I need to make these connections to make it work*'

(Interview March 2004, emphasis added)

### 6.2.2 Promoting Family Learning

A further example of the 'snowball effect' within this Learning Partnership stemmed from the discussions around events that linked to the notion of 'family learning'. Again,

many of these events highlighted informal learning in non-traditional settings. There are two categories of 'family learning programmes' that are eligible for funding by the LSC - 'Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy' and 'Wider Family Learning'. Illustrating the wide range of provision covered by this term, Haggart and Spacey (2003) state:

'Family learning' is generally understood to refer to learning approaches that engage parents and children jointly in learning. The term covers a wide range of models, from initiatives such as 'Bookstart' where book bags are distributed through health visitors to stimulate early book sharing in families to structured activities engaging families in museums and galleries to the wide range of family programmes funded through the LSC.

(p.2)

As a result of the interest generated at the meetings one provider decided to coordinate a 'Family Learning Event' which brought together practitioners from both the compulsory and post-compulsory sectors, museums, libraries, Sure Start centres, Campaign for Learning<sup>17</sup>, the local LSC, Pre-school Learning Alliance, and researchers working on projects focusing on family learning. I attended the event, spoke to other attendees and followed up with more formal interviews of some of the attendees. Reasons for attending the conference were mixed, but one of the main objectives was to gain information about other family learning provision and access to funding.

I also interviewed the marketing manager of the local LSC and he talked of the way in which the LSC makes use of the local Learning Partnership to direct funding for initiatives, such as 'family learning', that the LSCs consider to be policy priorities. From the diverse range of attendees at the Family Learning Conference it would appear that these policy priorities are 'feeding through' to the individual providers. On the other hand, it took the impetus provided by the ALW initiative for this event to be held, and given the high turnout for the event it would appear that this opportunity to share

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<sup>17</sup> An organisation that works in partnership with NIACE on a number of projects including Family Learning Week and Learning at Work day, which is held during ALW

examples of practice and information on funding was something that the providers felt was useful.

Illustrating the way in which the ALW themes are interpreted at a local level can be replicated at a national level, one of the pieces of literature in the delegate's pack for the family learning conference was a magazine produced by NIACE (2004), with support of the national LSC, which focused on family learning. The magazine contained articles from various members of NIACE which linked family learning, and the examples of research done in this area, to informal and community learning and with other issues highlighted by the 'skills for life' and 'equality and diversity' themes of ALW.

### **6.3 The workplace as a site of informal learning**

One of the first ways in which the ALW was used to promote 'learning at work' was through the 'New Learning Opportunities' Awards. These awards were designed to 'celebrate the achievements of organisations 'who have designed and delivered systems or programmes which can stand as models of innovation and excellence in learning' (NIACE, 1993, p.11). The awards covered a wide range of adult learning, and each year one 'General Award' and a number of 'Special Awards' are presented. Each of the Special Awards focuses on a particular area of provision, and one of these areas was 'Learning in the Workplace'. The award for this area of provision was funded by the Ford Employee Development and Achievement Programme (EDAP). Under the Ford EDAP scheme all Ford employees were entitled to up to £200 per year for learning and health/fitness activities so long as these are *not* related to their work. Whilst not all programmes of learning that were winners of this Special Award focused solely on learning activities not relating to work, there was an emphasis on informal learning and the workplace as a site for learning.

#### **6.3.1 Learning at Work Day**

'Learning at Work Day' was introduced as part of the ALW initiative in 1997. Although many of the events and activities that were organised by employers related to learning *for* work in the earlier years of this initiative, there were also a number of activities that were designed to encourage employees to engage in learning that is not directly work-related. Another way in which NIACE, through the 'Learning at Work Day', promoted informal learning in the workplace was, once again, through small grant funding.

From 1999 onwards 'Learning at Work Day' was organised in partnership with Campaign for Learning. Campaign for Learning began as an initiative funded by the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce (RSA), becoming an independent charitable organisation in 1997. Campaign for Learning is now involved in promoting a number of different learning activities, but the two main areas focused on in the earlier years of the organisation were family learning and learning at work.

In encouraging employers to think more broadly about the activities organised, the organisers' resource pack makes the point that:

LAW Day allows thousands of organisations to engage staff who might not normally take part in learning. Fun, informal learning can be far more successful in engaging employees who do not readily participate than a 'formal' course of programmes. Informal learning can also have a powerful effect on an organisation's goals - for example a day of job swaps can improve employees' understanding of how their workplace operates and can lead to more streamlined processes and better working relationships.

(Campaign for Learning, 2005, p.1)

Many of the examples of learning at work that have either received funding via ALW or are highlighted in NIACE literature, either promoting ALW or offering advice on how to plan sessions, are events that bring together informal learning activities with advice sessions on further learning. Other events highlighted involve employees delivering learning activities relating to their interests or hobbies.

Another aspect of 'Learning at Work' that has proved popular, and which has been highlighted in ALW literature, is 'Job Swap' schemes. In one example highlighted in the

Review of ALW 2000, Alan Tuckett 'job swapped' with Hugh Waddell, a club doorman who worked at a nightclub in Carlisle. Many of the schemes that involve 'job-swapping' outside of the normal work environment have been used to illustrate presentations of research findings and seminars that focus on role of informal learning in developing 'transferable skills' and 'soft skills'.

### 6.3.2 The skills strategy

Recent Government policy developments, such as the 'skills strategy' consultation document, *Success for All* (DFES, 2002); the subsequent White Paper proposals relating to the delivery of that strategy, *21st Century Skills: Realising our Potential* (DFES, 2003); and, most recently, the *Leitch Review of Skills*<sup>18</sup>, have led to NIACE voicing concerns that the value of informal learning is once again being overlooked as funding priorities have shifted. (NIACE, 2002; 2003a; 2003b; 2005).

In their response to the Leitch Review, NIACE emphasised the role of informal learning in developing skills relating directly to paid employment, and learning that has a 'valuable social function':

'employers regularly stress the importance of softer generic skills. NIACE has long argued that the key industrial skill is the skill of learning – and that that can be learned wherever learners' motivation is fired.'

(p5)

...

'Indeed, part of the UK's commercial advantage lies in the quality of its civic life, and to maintain and enhance social cohesion and to foster an active citizenship in an ageing society will also make demands on post-compulsory education and

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<sup>18</sup> a Treasury-based commission designed to 'identify the UK's optimal skills mix in 2020 to maximise economic growth, productivity and social justice, and to consider the policy implications of achieving the level of change required' (HM Treasury, 2005),

training – as the Government recognised in the remit of the Learning and Skills Council and in successive White Papers.’

(p.6)

Once again, ALW has provided the opportunity for the metaphorical ‘punch on the nose’ with which to emphasise the key areas of concern voiced by NIACE and its members. Examples of related events held during ALW are:

- ALW 2004 Policy Conference: ‘Soft Structures, Hard Outcomes – Informal Learning, Adults and the Skills Strategy’. This conference focused on ‘the role of informal learning in skills acquisition for work and in building confidence and capacity in community settings’ (NIACE, 2004, p.7).
- Publication launch: ‘Soft Structures, Hard Outcomes’ - research carried out by NIACE in association with the Centre for Labour Market Studies at the University of Leicester. Findings suggest that activities such as ‘doing the job, being shown techniques by colleagues, engaging in self-reflection and active observation can be of more help to employees in raising their performance than attending training courses or acquiring qualifications’ (NIACE, 2004, p.10).
- ALW 2005 Policy Conference: ‘Sectoral Approaches to Workplace Learning’ – this conference focused on the role of the new Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)<sup>19</sup> in promoting workplace learning. NIACE has been named as one of the ‘key delivery partners’ by the Sector Skills Development Agency. The conference included presentations of case studies illustrating ‘the demand-led work of

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<sup>19</sup> Part of the role of the new SSCs is to improve learning opportunities across the sector that they represent. Under the direction of the Sector Skills Development Agency, Sector Skills Agreements (SSAs) will be formed. These are designed to ‘enable the government, employers, employee representatives and organisations who plan, fund and support education and training to work together to tackle the provision of skills around a common set of objectives’.

employers and employees and how various agencies were utilising demand-led approaches in pursuit of skills acquisition in the workplace' (NIACE, 2005, p.6).

During our interview I asked Alan Tuckett if there were any visions that he had had for the ALW initiative in 1992 that he didn't feel had been, as yet, fulfilled. His response was:

'we haven't really been very effective in HE or that effective in the workplace. I mean 'Learning at Work Day', once a year thousands and thousands of people do 'take your daughter to work' or 'job-swaps'. You have the Head of the DFES swapping with the Head of Microsoft. I went and swapped with a bouncer at a Cumbrian nightclub and he ran NIACE for the day. Very interesting... but I wouldn't say that we've managed to use the Week to be as effective in transforming thinking about learning as an activity in the workplace.'

Given what appears to be a shift in Government funding priorities in this area, as reflected in the Skills Strategy policy documents, it would seem likely that a good deal of advocacy work still needs to be done. It might well be the case that the constraints of public funding will mean that 'transforming thinking about learning as an activity in the workplace' will not be achievable without a significant change in the attitude of more employers towards investment in this area.



## **6.4 Learning ‘for fun’ and ‘for pleasure’**

One of the core messages that has run through the promotion of ALW since its inception has been that learning can be fun and a pleasurable experience. There are, however, difficulties with the notion that learning can be simply ‘for fun’ or ‘for pleasure’, unless it is funded in some other way than through the ‘public purse’. With the advent of the LSC, ‘informal’ learning has secured a better position in terms of funding than it held under the previous arrangements. It could be argued, however, that with the emphasis on measuring learning outcomes it has become increasingly difficult to articulate any notion of ‘learning for its own sake’. In this section I will look at examples of how activities that have been linked to the ‘community, culture and citizenship’ theme have highlighted ways of engaging adults in learning that draws on their existing interests, hobbies and pastimes.

### **6.4.1 Celebrating ‘culture’**

The ‘culture’ element of this theme has been interpreted very broadly over the years, allowing a diverse range of learning activities to be linked to the theme.

One such event, which is run on an annual basis, is the ‘Inspired By...’ campaign. Each year the V& A Museum runs a competition to encourage part-time learners to produce a piece of artwork inspired by the museum’s collections. In 2005 the Manchester City Galleries and the Tyne and Wear joined the V&A museum in promoting this competition. During ALW the winners of the competition have their artworks displayed in the museums which inspired them. Other examples of linking museums as sites for informal learning to ALW include events organised by the British Film Institute in the National Film Theatre and the Museum of Moving Images in 1995. May, the month in

which ALW is always held, is now 'Museums and Galleries Month' and NIACE provides advice on how to link learning activities to this promotional campaign.

Using a less conventional interpretation of 'culture', in 1997 NIACE organised a 'Line Dance Link-up':

'to show that learning can be fun and accessible to anyone. Five thousand beginners and enthusiasts crowded car parks, beaches, shopping centres, town centres, schools and leisure centres. Over 50 locations were used in an attempt to dance into the Guinness Book of records'

(NIACE, 1997, p.9)

In 1999 NIACE linked the theme to its 'Growing Old Disgracefully' campaign and offered small grant funding for activities:

"where pensioners give themselves permission to do things they would not previously have done, like singing opera from an open-topped double-decker, water-skiing on the Mersey - enjoyable learning can lead you to surprising places."

(Tuckett, 2001)

Many regional and local activities organised for ALW are advertised as 'taster sessions', tying in with the idea of ALW as a 'motivational campaign' concerned with 'giving people the opportunity to try something out' rather than 'bums on seat' (Interview with Kate Malone). Adopting a similar rationale<sup>20</sup>, in 2001 the LSC introduced its month-long 'Bite Size' initiative, and in 2002 the initiative was promoted through ALW. Through the initiative the LSC funds events organised by local providers

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<sup>20</sup> Whilst there is no obligation for participants to take part in further learning, as part of the audit trial required by the LSC, participants are obliged to provide their personal details. They are also asked, but not obliged, to complete an evaluation form for the event. All the practitioners that I interviewed about this initiative felt that this was a weakness, with some participants reluctant to give their personal details, but providers unable to claim the funding unless these details were provided.

designed to 'offer people a short sharp and successful taste of learning'. The funding can be used for all types of learning and, as such, has been particularly useful to providers wanting to organise events based around informal learning.

Many of the regional/local events that link into the 'culture' element of the 'Community, culture and citizenship' theme are those that proved to be most attractive in terms of reporting both in local newspapers and local television and radio. As I described earlier, since 1992 NIACE had provided organisers of regional activities with advice on how to highlight the 'human interest' aspect of stories and the importance of using celebrity contacts or 'stunts' in order to provide attractive photo opportunities. This has remained a key aspect of the information and guidance available to event organisers, and from 2003 onwards NIACE has been organising media training seminars, in conjunction with CSV Media<sup>21</sup>. These seminars include workshops on producing newsletters, radio interviewing advice and practice sessions and workshops covering 'the necessary skills to get your message across including a range of media ideas/hooks for campaigns'. The use of 'media hooks' to promote the 'fun' element of learning is useful in terms of linking this kind of learning to people's hobbies and interests. There is, perhaps, a negative side to this kind of promotion. Whilst it can prove successful in terms of engaging learners, if we think back to the categorisation of some learning as 'leisure activities' and others as 'education' within the 1991 White Paper, it can also be represented negatively - as 'tap-dancing on the rates'.

During a discussion at a meeting of the ALW Information Exchange Group, a regional coordinator gave the example of a 'Bite Size' event organised by one of the colleges in the region where learners were given guidance on assembling flat-pack furniture. The promotion of this event was so 'successful' that reporters from the Daily Mail (Bill

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<sup>21</sup> CSV Media is part of the organisation 'Community Service Volunteers' the UK's largest volunteering organisation.

Mouland) and The Daily Telegraph (Nick Brittain) enrolled on the course and reported on their experiences. The event was also reported in The Sun, the Independent on Sunday, the Times Educational Supplement, The Mail on Sunday, The Times, local newspapers and on the BBC News website. The media attention did provide valuable promotion to the college and the Bite Size initiative. For example local newspapers did report on other future Bite Size courses that were available, and the college's communications director managed to get the purpose of the initiative across in a quote in the Daily Mail - 'The idea is to bring people in who want to be confident of their abilities, learn new skills and not be frightened of a classroom environment' (21<sup>st</sup> Jan 2004, p.11). Other reports, however, suggested that the college had considered other courses, for example 'Reverse Parking for Women', 'Putting on a Duvet Cover Without Ending up Inside it' and a specialist course for men, 'Ironing Shirts'. The reporter from the Daily Telegraph reported on his completion of the task as being met with 'so much back-patting and relief, you'd think we'd just climbed Everest!' (24<sup>th</sup> Jan 2004, p.9).

Whilst it was noticeable that in this particular example none of the reporting emphasised the funding of this event in a negative way, it does highlight the potential difficulties in promoting 'learning for fun', whilst at the same time having the purpose of this kind of provision 'taken seriously'.

#### 6.4.2 Life, Leeks and Lilies

For ALW 2004 NIACE, in collaboration with the ESF and Thrive22, published a booklet called 'Life, Leeks and Lilies'. The booklet highlighted:

'... how much learning is going on in gardens without people really noticing.  
Most of the stories featured here are about learning outside of formal learning institutions. Others show gardens as the inspiration for painting, poetry,

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<sup>22</sup> A national charity that uses 'gardening and horticulture to enable people to increase self-esteem and build confidence; learn basic skills and social skills; gain qualifications and the opportunity to move into employment; and, rebuild their lives after illness and accident' (NIACE, 2004, p.34).

photography and cooking. Yet others show how voluntary sector organisations such as Thrive and the BBC are making a real contribution to people's lives by opening up less formal and new learning opportunities, based on the passion for gardening'

(NIACE, 2004, p.7)

In the run-up to ALW 2004 newsletters from the NIACE Campaigns and Promotions Team highlighted that 2004 was the bi-centennial of the foundation of the Royal Horticultural Society and encouraged practitioners to link activities related to the theme of Community, Culture and Citizenship to people's interest in gardening and horticulture.

During this year the BBC also launched its 'Neighbourhood Gardener Scheme' - 'a gardening mentor scheme for enthusiastic amateur gardeners. Gardeners volunteer their time and experience to pass on their knowledge and passion to others in their local community'. Volunteers who are interested in becoming a neighbourhood gardener would attend training courses<sup>23</sup> at a local college and then join the Neighbourhood Gardener Team associated with that college.

Monty Don, the presenter of BBC Gardeners' World, contributed an article to the booklet explaining why gardening was so important to him and describing how he felt gardening had helped him overcome mental health problems. The booklet contained stories of projects or individuals illustrating the benefits of this kind of informal learning in relation to mental health issues. Provision of learning opportunities for learners with mental health problems is one of the areas that is also promoted under the 'learning and health' theme of ALW, and in 2004 the results of a survey into this type of provision was published by NIACE.

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<sup>23</sup> These were 'fee-paying' courses that would need to be funded either by a community project or the individual themselves. In some colleges concessionary fees were available.

Other stories in the booklet included projects funded by the Adult and Community Learning Fund, a funding initiative coordinated by NIACE on behalf of the Government. Other examples illustrated the benefits of inter-generational and community learning; informal learning as a 'stepping stone' into further learning; projects for adults with learning difficulties; and, a project at Leyhill Open Prison which encourages prisoners to design and build gardens for entry into the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. These individuals and groups had been past winners of ALW awards.

As an example of a 'widening participation', this project demonstrates the potential of informal learning based around people's hobbies or pastimes to be linked to a number of different agendas and, as such, to a number of different funding streams and sources of support. This broad appeal is also demonstrated by the number of nominations for ALW awards that relate to this type of learning.

In 2004 I was a member of the selection panel for the ALW Group Awards. Similar criteria for nominations for the Individual Awards and the panel are asked to consider the same issues when selecting their 'emblematic winners'. The selection panel is asked to shortlist 10 entries from which the Campaigns and Promotions Team will select 5 winners. Given the purpose of the Awards, 'to recognise and promote the benefits of adults learning or working together towards a collective goal or purpose (NIACE, 2004, p.89), the majority of the nominations link to the 'Community, Culture and Citizenship' theme and many focus on the way in which learning links to people's interests and hobbies.

In 2004 there were 154 nominations for the Group Awards with all of the ALW regions represented. Reading through all of the nomination forms and recording my thoughts

was an exhausting experience. However, reading the sheer diversity of the range of projects, and the ingenuity shown by the participants in establishing their projects was, I felt, an inspiring and quite an emotional experience. Having worked for many years in the sector, it was not as though these types of projects were unfamiliar to me and yet the medium of the 'learners' voice', which comes through very strongly in the nomination forms, is certainly a powerful tool for communicating the value of this sort learning. Selecting my shortlist of ten nominations to take to the selection panel meeting was a less enjoyable experience. The only way to complete the process was to take a pragmatic approach, focusing on the various aspects that NIACE asks the panel members to consider. Given the number of nominations it is perhaps surprising that there was quite a degree of consensus in the nominations on the individual panel member's shortlists – from a panel of 10 members there were 46 different nominations shortlisted. On the other hand, it might have been the case that, as all members of the panel were practitioners who had been involved in ALW, they were adept at recognising a certain type of 'voice'; one that would prove effective in terms of appealing to other learners, but also met the priorities reflected in the issues and concerns that NIACE seeks to address.

The eventual winners of the awards were:

- A gardening project from South West Region involving learners at a residential facility for people with various mental health difficulties. The group grows vegetables for their own consumption and sells the surplus to fund the project.
- A group of villagers from North East Region who live in a small, rural isolated community who, with the support of an outreach worker from an FE college, established an IT learning centre in the village. In order to achieve this they had to raise funds for, and carry out, a refurbishment of the local pub.

- A group of older Asian women from East Midlands Region, all of whom are registered disabled, who formed an 'arts and crafts' group. The group began as a way of overcoming the isolation they felt within their community, but has progressed to giving exhibitions of their work, which they also sell to the public.
- A group of young parents from South East Region who received training as 'peer group supporters' at an FE college. Once trained, members of the group go to local schools and youth clubs to speak to young people about sexual health and relationships.
- A women's group project from West Midlands Region called 'Yes, you will go to the ball!'. The name for the project reflects its origins. The women had all participated in a number of short courses at a local drop-in centre. The drop-in centre was to hold a fundraising ball and the project was established to help learners who wanted to attend the ball to make their own ball-gowns. The course ran for 17 weeks and 20 women took part in the course. The women ranged in ages from 17 – 82; members of the group were variously unemployed, working full-time, working part-time, retired or were unable to work due to sickness or disability; and, declared their ethnic backgrounds as White British, Black African, Asian Indian and Asian Pakistani.

In outlining the details of these award winners I have, quite deliberately, removed the 'voices' of the learners in order to give an emphasis to the pragmatic choices made in selecting these emblematic winners. Having attended the award ceremonies for both national and regional awards, and having spoken to current and previous winners of awards, I believe that these winners do feel that their achievements are 'celebrated' and that they have valued the experience. I have also spoken to learners who were nominees, but were not selected as winners. They too appeared to have valued the experience. I am also persuaded of the case made for the efficacy of the awards in



terms of engaging new learners and promoting policy issues and concerns. At the same time, I believe it is important to recognise that the 'voices' of these learners are mediated to suit the priorities of practitioners. Whilst the rationale behind those priorities might be based on well-intentioned actions designed to better meet the perceived needs of learners, and in one sense these winners could be viewed as beneficiaries of these actions, it is still the case that the values and attributes of which these winners are 'emblematic' are constructed by people other than the learners themselves.

## **6.5. Summary and Conclusion**

In this chapter I have explored the way in which the theme of 'Community, culture and citizenship' has been used as a focus for activities and events during ALW. This theme focuses on promoting informal learning in community and non-traditional settings and, as such, it can be interpreted as relating to a number of different types of learning taking place in a wide variety of settings.

The examples that I have discussed articulate the value of this learning in two different ways. Firstly, that it has a value in itself and secondly, that it can provide a 'stepping stone' into more formal forms of learning:

- Informal learning is valuable in itself
  - It assists learners in acquiring 'soft' or 'transferable' skills that are useful in a number of different settings.
  - It has the potential to appeal to a wide variety of people from differing age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, ethnic backgrounds, and both those with disabilities and the 'able bodied';
  - It has an extended range of benefits in terms of learners' health, overcoming isolation, building a sense of shared community and intergenerational learning.
  - It takes place in environments that are 'non-threatening', and therefore is a useful way of widening participation.
  - It allows people to build on existing interests and hobbies, and to try out something for the first time without enrolling on a course of study.
  - It can be 'fun', and it can be 'enjoyable'.

- Informal learning can provide a ‘stepping stone’:
  - Into paid employment
  - Into other forms of more formal learning carried out in traditional settings.

The examples I have discussed provide further illustrations of the process of micro-manipulation, and these can be related to the four strands of the framework that I discussed in Chapter 6:

### ***Building partnerships***

The ‘Life, leeks and lilies’ project provides a good example of how the theme of ‘Citizenship, culture and communities’ can be used to build partnerships between providers of post-compulsory education and other organisations. Both NIACE and Thrive have what could be referred to as an ‘inclusion agenda’. For Thrive, this agenda is rooted in its aim to ‘make use of gardening to change the lives of disabled people’ (Thrive, p.1, 2004). As an organisation they pursue this aim through organising gardening projects; carrying out research into the benefits for those involved in these gardening projects; offering advice to individual gardeners and organisations that want to be involved in this type of project; and, running short courses relating to their knowledge and experience of organising gardening projects of this kind. Through these aims and activities Thrive illustrates, in practical terms, some of the arguments that NIACE puts forward as to the value of informal learning in non-traditional settings. Through the ‘Life, Leeks and Lilies’ booklet both NIACE and Thrive were able to promote their organisations and the work that they do. Through the booklet being linked to the ALW initiative, the cost of the publication of the booklet was met by the

ESF. The booklet was distributed free of charge to practitioners interested in organising gardening projects.

The linking of this project to the BBC's 'Neighbourhood Gardener Scheme' brought the benefits of an endorsement by the BBC's Monty Don – a celebrity who is not only well-known to a large audience for his expertise in this area, but who was willing to add his own personal 'case study' to promote the benefits of being involved in gardening. The BBC's involvement provides the opportunity to promote the initiative on a nationwide basis directly into the homes of possible participants. The links between the 'Neighbourhood Gardener Scheme' and education providers provides another illustration of the arguments as to the value of this type of learning. The scheme promotes intergenerational learning and acts as a 'stepping stone' from informal learning to accredited courses in formal settings. Through the development of this project the BBC has a practical example of how it fulfils the remit of its Charter.

Further examples of the collaboration between education providers and other organisations are illustrated by the involvement in ALW by museums and galleries.

### ***Influencing policy***

The election of New Labour brought about a restructuring of, and major upheaval in, the post-compulsory education sector. I have discussed how the policy-making process involved in the development of the Learning and Skills Councils provided an opportunity to attempt to influence the proposed new structure of the sector. I have demonstrated how the ALW initiative provides NIACE with case studies with which to

illustrate both the arguments put forward as to what shape that structure should take, and concerns and issues that arise as the policy-making process unfolds.

I have described, using the examples of 'Learning at Work Day' and the New Learning Opportunities Awards, how the experiences of NIACE in promoting informal learning in the workplace through the ALW initiative provide the organisation with positive examples with which to support their arguments in relation to recent policy developments, in this instance the Government's skills strategy. Conferences held during ALW, and which are attended by representatives from Government and organisations tasked with overseeing the delivery of the policies, are used to present research findings and highlight concerns and issues relating to those policies.

### ***Acting as a critical friend***

Using again the example of 'Learning at Work Day', I discussed how NIACE and its partners continue to offer advice and guidance in relation to developing informal learning projects within the workplace and, through small grant funding, provide 'seed money' for employers to develop new projects. Through the New Learning Opportunities Awards the ALW continues to highlight the success of such projects.

The conferences held during ALW continue to inform employers of the impact of policy developments, and attempt to persuade these organisations into supporting particular courses of action with regards to these policy developments.

The introduction of the new system of funding under the LSCs, and other reforms in related policy areas, involved the creation of a number of organisations to deliver

specific policy aims. These organisations often have access to ‘ring fenced’ funding – for example Aimhigher, Sure Start and other members of Learning Partnerships formed to deliver projects funded by local LSCs – and needed to develop partnerships in order to deliver their objectives. Drawing on my involvement with a local Learning Partnership, I discussed how, nationally, NIACE uses ALW to highlight practice that is effective in delivering these aims and building these partnerships, and regionally, it provides small grant funding to stimulate such projects.

### ***The mutual benefits of the national/local relationship***

In all of the examples I have discussed in this chapter ALW provides a focal point for information and advice on developments in key policy areas. ALW provides practitioners with access to resources in the form of small grants, free advice and guidance and opportunities to promote their own events and activities. The feedback from these events provides NIACE with case studies which enhance both their promotional and advocacy work. Alongside the feedback from events, the involvement of a wide range of practitioners in the process of both nominating learners and selecting winners provides NIACE with the structure to run the ALW awards on a national basis at a relatively low cost. Drawing on my experiences as a participant in the selection panel for the ALW Group Awards I discussed how the expertise of practitioners results in the selection of ‘emblematic winners’ whose stories ‘give a voice’ to the concerns and issues that NIACE seeks to address.

In this chapter I have raised a number of issues and concerns that I had in relation to the examples I have discussed.

- Using the examples of the events organised by a local Learning Partnership for ALW 2004, I discussed how the provision of small grant funding encouraged a

‘snowball’ effect in terms of the events and activities that were planned. My concern was that, whilst this small grant funding could be viewed as effective, it might also be disguising a weakness in the system of provision. Those involved in the events recognise the weakness in the system, however, their roles as practitioners necessitate taking advantage of whatever resources are made available to them.

- I highlighted how, despite the continued advocacy work done by NIACE and its partners, in part through the ALW initiative, the majority of employers still remain to be convinced of the case for a ‘transformation in thinking’ concerning the role of learning in the workplace. I highlighted concerns that, as Government’s policy priorities shift, what ground has been gained is in danger of being lost.
- With regards to the funding of learning that is ‘for fun’, I discussed how this type of learning could be effective as a tool for widening participation. I highlighted how this type of learning provides opportunities to generate interest through the media in order to promote the events and in doing so engage potential learners. I also raised the issue of the potential for difficulties to arise in promoting learning ‘as fun’ at the same time as arguing for the benefits of informal learning to be taken seriously.
- In my discussion of the ALW Group Awards I highlighted concerns about the way in which the learners’ voices are ‘made use of’. Whilst I recognise how powerful a tool these voices can be, and acknowledge the need for such a tool in terms of promoting participation and articulating the value of informal learning, there remains the issue that these learners voices are mediated by the concerns of practitioners, they cannot really be said to be ‘speaking for themselves’.

I will return to these issues, and discuss them in relation to the broader concerns of inclusion and participation, in the final chapter of this thesis.



## **Chapter Seven: Equality and Diversity**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This theme links strongly with the advocacy work that NIACE carries out at a national level and within 'traditional' policy-making fora. As discussed earlier, NIACE documents often summarise the advocacy role of the organisation as 'working for more and different learners' and the Equality and Diversity theme, with its focus on issues relating to participation, ties in with this aim. One way in which NIACE has highlighted issues relating to participation has been through surveys of adult participation, the findings of which are highlighted during ALW.

In 1994 the findings of a joint NIACE/MORI opinion poll entitled 'Who Participates?' was reported in the Guardian newspaper during Adult Learners' Week and in 1996 a similar survey, which had been commissioned by NIACE and the Department for Education and Employment, was produced by Gallup. The findings of this latter survey were reported in the publication 'The Learning Divide' (Sargant with Field et. al., 1997). The 'headline' findings of this survey were:

- three in five of all adults have not taken part in adult learning in the last three years;
- more men than women are currently learning or have been recent learners;
- age is a barrier to participation;
- social class continues to be the key discriminator in participation;
- adults who are not in work have almost half the levels of participation as those in work or seeking work;

- length of initial education is still the best single predictor of participation in adult learning;
- there are major national and regional variations.

The next NIACE survey on participation 'Marking Time' (Tuckett and Sargant, 1999) was highlighted during ALW 1999 and from 2000 onwards an annual survey of participation in adult learning has been carried out by NIACE (Sargant, 2000; Aldridge and Tuckett, 2001 onwards), and the findings of these surveys have been highlighted during Adult Learners' Week.

I have discussed the trends identified in these surveys in Chapter 2, but in this chapter I want to examine two particular issues that have been highlighted in these surveys, the low rates of participation in learning by older people and the way in which access to information and communication technologies impacts on existing patterns of non-participation.

In section 7.2 I will discuss the participation in learning by older learners. I will begin by discussing how ALW has been used to highlight policy issues in the past, specifically the demand for a participation target for older learners, and how the events and activities of ALW have been used to enhance the advocacy work of the 'Older and Bolder' special interest group within NIACE.

I will then consider some of the opportunities, and the potential problems, presented by current Government policy priorities. These priorities have been summarised most recently in the Department for Work and Pensions Older People's Strategy report 'The Opportunity Age' (DWP, 2005), and in which the Prime Minister states:

‘An ageing society is too often - and wrongly - seen solely in terms of increasing dependency. But the reality is that, as older people become an ever more significant proportion of the population, society will increasingly depend upon the contribution they can make.’

(p. ix)

The strategy report highlights the importance of both ‘extending learning opportunities for older people so they can stay in work’ and the role of learning in promoting what is referred to as ‘active ageing ... older people participating in their families and communities’ (p. xvi). Both of these aspects of participation in learning by older people have been highlighted during ALW. The ‘Equality and Diversity’ theme is used to articulate issues relating to achieving equal access to existing learning opportunities, but also the diverse range of learning provision that would be required to meet the needs of all adults who want to participate in learning. I will discuss how recent changes in policy priorities might be helpful in terms of addressing issues of equal access to learning opportunities relating to paid employment, but also how the economic rationale that underpins these changes in priorities might be less helpful in addressing other issues.

Finally in this section, I will outline how the ALW theme day ‘Silver Surfers’ Day’ has been used to highlight issues relating to participation by older learners in one specific area of learning - the use of information and communication technologies (ICT). In ‘The Learning Divide Revisited’ Naomi Sargent states:

‘the previously documented gap between the learning-rich and the learning-poor is being compounded by an emerging information divide where people with access to the new communications technologies are more likely to have access to learning than those without.’

(Sargent, 2000, p.7).

The 'Silver Surfers' Day' initiative was designed to promote ICT learning programmes that were designed specifically to meet the needs of older learners, but also to promote the benefits of using ICT in other forms learning. I will highlight how this ALW theme day has proved successful in promoting both equality of access to learning opportunities and the diverse range of learning that are enabled through the use of ICT.

More generally, in recent years Government funding for learning provision that encourages the use of ICT has been increased and initiatives, such as UK Online, have meant that education providers have been able to access funding for capital expenditure on ICT resources. The objective behind the UK Online initiative is to enable everyone in the UK to have nearby access to the Internet and email and to provide learning opportunities for people to:

- Learn where and how to gain access
- Learn how to use a PC or the Internet
- Get help with using technology
- Find out about what's available online
- Recognise that the Internet has something to offer them

While for those already online, the initiative will help them make the most of the Internet, by:

- Helping less experienced surfers find out more about what they can do online
- Helping more experienced Internet users and businesses to deal with each other more efficiently to help create real lifestyle and business benefits

- Provide an additional way of interacting with government via electronic service delivery of government services and transactions

([http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-envoy/briefings-top/\\$file/onlinecampaign.htm](http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-envoy/briefings-top/$file/onlinecampaign.htm))

In section 7.3 I will discuss a pilot study I carried out of the planning for and delivery of activities for Adult Learners' Week in a learndirect centre based at a local further education college. 'learndirect' is the brand name for the free national 'helpline' that people can call to find out about local learning opportunities, learning materials produced by the University for Industry (Ufi) <sup>24</sup> for people to learn at work or home, and the details of centres where learners can use ICT provided either by learndirect or other government initiatives, such as UK Online, to access learndirect courses:

Behind learndirect lies Ufi Ltd, one of the government's key partners in delivering the workforce development and lifelong learning agenda. Ufi is bringing about a revolution in learning by taking forward the government's concept of a 'university for industry.' learndirect is Ufi's network of online learning and information services which was rolled out nation-wide across England, Wales and Northern Ireland from 25 October 2000 following a successful national pilot.

(Ufi, 2003)

learndirect also provides 'core funding' for the ALW initiative. My original rationale for choosing to carry out a pilot study at the learndirect centre was that I was interested in seeing how, and indeed if, practitioners working within the centre made links between the 'learning for work' focus of learndirect and the wider agenda for learning promoted by ALW. My assumption was that the pilot study would demonstrate that funding

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<sup>24</sup> Ufi aims to 'drive up the demand for learning, help adults improve their employability by acquiring new knowledge and skills, and help businesses become more competitive' (Ufi, 2003)

directed at learning designed to meet the needs of 'the workplace' would provide few opportunities to meet a broader, more inclusive agenda.

Through a research project that I had completed previously, exploring the possible role of ICT in delivering the recommendations of the Kennedy Report (1997), I had some knowledge of the types of courses that learndirect was providing. With its emphasis on providing learning designed to help adults to improve their employability, and taking into account the method of delivery of that learning, individual learners accessing courses either via the Internet or on PC software, I had expected to find a very different learning environment from the one I actually encountered at this centre. The environment at the centre was a lot more relaxed and informal than I had imagined and there was a greater variety in the types of learning taking place than I had envisaged. In this section I will discuss how the practitioners working at this learndirect centre made use of the resources available to them to provide a range of activities linked to ALW.

## **7.2 Older Learners**

As already discussed, one of the themes for ALW 1993 was 'Learning in later life', and this theme was linked to the European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations. The UK programme for the Year focused on four themes – combating ageism; health promotion and active leisure; removing barriers to social and environmental integration; and, volunteering. The ALW theme was designed to illustrate that 'education can play a major role in each of these areas' (NIACE, 1993, p.6).

One of the national conferences organised by NIACE during ALW was 'Educational opportunities for older people'. This conference 'provided an opportunity to review the ground-breaking work of the Carnegie Inquiry into the Third Age<sup>25</sup>' (NIACE, 1993, p.6). Throughout 1992, The Carnegie Inquiry had reported on a number of policy issues, including access to learning (Carnegie UK Trust, 1992), which previous research by the Trust had highlighted as being of specific concern to people over the age of 50. In 1993 the Trust published its final inquiry report (Carnegie UK Trust, 1993), which summarised the policy issues explored in the individual reports and outlined an agenda for action in the future.

The NIACE/MORI poll 'Who Participates', which was published during ALW 1994, highlighted 'a dramatic fall in the numbers of older adults participating in some kind of study compared with the Learning and Leisure survey<sup>26</sup> of 1990' (NIACE, 1994, p.21). The findings of this participation survey were used by NIACE to support a demand that

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<sup>25</sup> The Carnegie Inquiry defined 'the third age' as a stage of life between the ages of 50 and 75.

<sup>26</sup> The findings of the 'Learning and Leisure Survey' had been used to support arguments for the importance of 'Course for the leisure interests of adults' during the campaign against the 1991 White Paper proposals.

an additional National Target for Education and Training should be introduced, and that this target should take the form of a commitment to reverse the decline in learning by older people within two years and to implement annual targets to increase participation after that two years. The call for this target to be introduced was endorsed by The Carnegie Third Age programme.

The aims of the Carnegie UK Trust are ‘to support research, public policy analysis and grass roots social action initiatives’ (Carnegie UK Trust, 2005) and, as part of fulfilling those aims, the Trust supports “think tank’ research and policy analysis leading to more strategic change at national level as well as providing grants for grass roots projects’. In 1995 the Carnegie UK Trust part-funded, along with the Esmée Fairburn Charitable Trust, NIACE’s ‘Older and Bolder’ initiative, which has the specific aim of promoting more and better opportunities for people over 50 to participate in learning. The ‘Older and Bolder’ initiative has input across the range of advocacy work carried out by NIACE. For example, NIACE’s official responses to policy documents, where relevant, would include a specific response on behalf of the ‘Older and Bolder’ Advisory Group, and the ‘Older and Bolder’ team also coordinate policy conferences, carry out research projects and prepare policy briefings.

To return to the example of NIACE’s demands for a National Target for older learners, in 1998 the Government’s Green Paper ‘*The Learning Age*’ proposed that a learning participation target be introduced as part of the Government’s new National Learning Targets. This Learning Participation target was designed to ‘drive up learning on the part of all adults<sup>27</sup>, whether they are economically active or not’. All the other targets that were proposed in relation to adult learning would only measure learning by adults who were economically active and under normal retirement age. Whilst NIACE broadly

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<sup>27</sup> The target, when introduced, only included adults up to the age of 69



welcomed the introduction of the Learning Participation Target, in its response to a report by the National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets (NIACE, 1998) regarding the proposals in Green Paper it continued to make the case for the broadest possible interpretation of 'learning' to include 'informal learning' as well as education and training. NIACE also argued that no age limit should be put on the cohort to be surveyed.

In a separate and more general response to the Green Paper proposals, the 'Older and Bolder' programme advisory group stated that whilst 'the vision is inspiring, it is difficult to find it applied to older people in the context that follows, apart from one or two passing references'. In arguing for the specific needs of older learners to be given more prominence, the advisory group states that:

From the Older and Bolder initiative's Senior Learner Awards, and from our organisations' other experiences, we can cite many instances of individuals whose achievements are great and for whom learning has transformed their lives. We have collected also much evidence of imaginative education and training provision, much of it in partnerships of very different agencies, which thrive even in the face of extreme shortage of resources. However, these are the relatively few shining examples. Most older people do not have much opportunity to pursue learning programmes and therefore little faith that learning is for them.

(NIACE Older and Bolder Advisory Group, 1998, p.2)

The Senior Learners' Awards referred to are presented as part of the ALW initiative and the 'evidence of imaginative education and training provision' includes case studies of activities funded through various small grant schemes linked to ALW and the New Learning Opportunities Awards.

### 7.2.1 The 'ageing society'

Concerns raised by changing demographic patterns, often referred to as an 'ageing society', have recently brought opportunities to raise again the specific needs of older adult learners. It could be argued that the participation target for older learners, matched with Government funding to make that target achievable, would have put the Government in a better position to tackle the issues that it now acknowledges.

The White Paper 'Opportunity Age – Meeting the challenges of ageing in the 21st century' (DWP, 2005) illustrates the way in which the Government is beginning to formulate policies to address these issues. NIACE's official response to the White Paper welcomes the proposals:

"NIACE welcomes the efforts of Government to bring together in a cohesive way and in a coherent document all the different strands of work that have been developed over the last few years to help create a better quality of life for older people. In doing so they have recognised the value of learning and the importance of the state education system to help deliver that aspiration".

(NIACE, 2005, p.1).

Other recent policy developments have also provided opportunities to re-emphasise issues that arise when Government policy is constructed around models that not only privilege the 'world of work', but also a certain model of the way in which this 'world' fits into the broader context that surrounds it. In its response to the Leitch Review, NIACE highlights that, despite the increased awareness of the changing demographic patterns, policies continue to be implemented that do not recognise the realities of these patterns:

'Two in three jobs of the next decade cannot be filled by young labour market entrants because there are not enough young people in the age cohort. Despite this, the first four sector skills agreements assume volumes of recruitment of

young people that total twice the entire cohort, and there are twenty-one more agreements to come!

(NIACE, 2005, p.5)

The response argues that there will be increasing pressure to 're-skill' learners already participating in paid employment, but also to recruit adults currently not in waged work. Making the point that these developments will put an additional burden on those engaged in maintaining 'the fabric of a vibrant civil society', the response argues that 'such work is just as much in need of skills maintenance and development as learning at work'. The dual focus of the argument being made in this response illustrates what is possibly one of the more difficult aspects of trying to engage with, and manipulate, emerging policy agenda.

One of the first concerns of Government as it tackles the issues of 'an ageing society' seems to be to make the case for older people to continue in paid employment for longer. This provides an opportunity to promote approaches to learning at work as outlined in Chapter 7, and may even provide the impetus for the 'transforming thinking about learning as an activity in the workplace'. There is, however, the potential that policy responses will marginalise the broader range of issues relating to the widening of participation in learning for older people. To promote both aspects of the agenda will require support from a broad coalition of organisations – those whose primary focus is the world of waged work and those whose interests are the wider benefits of learning. One example of how such a coalition can prove effective is illustrated by the theme day 'Silver Surfers' Day', which has taken place on the Friday of ALW for the last four years.

### 7.2.2 Silver Surfers' Day

'Silver Surfers' Day' was introduced as part of ALW 2002. The aim of this focus day was to increase the number of older people in the UK using Information Communication Technology (ICT). For ALW 2002 Silver Surfers Day was organised by 'Hairnet UK'<sup>28</sup> in collaboration with Age Concern and NIACE, but over the next three years the number of organisations involved in coordinating and sponsoring the focus day has grown. The 'Silver Surfers Day Coalition' consists of Hairnet UK, the Association of Colleges (AOC), an organisation that promotes the interests of further education colleges in England and Wales; the Emerging Role of Sheltered Housing (ERoSH), a national consortium for providers of sheltered and retirement housing; and, LEAFEA, a national network of local authority adult education providers. Silver Surfers Day is sponsored by NIACE, ESF and City and Guilds.

The organisations that have become involved illustrate the broad appeal of this focus day. For example ESF's interest is in helping older learners to improve their ICT skills in order to gain employment, whereas ERoSH focuses more on the 'valuable social function' of developing ICT skills. Talking of the organisation's involvement in the focus day, and of her role as a judge of the 'Silver Surfer of the Year' awards, Linda Milton, chief executive of Waltham Forest Housing Association and ERoSH trustee said:

I read some amazing entries where technology had empowered residents' lives and had made a dramatic change to them and others too: advice on cancers; accessibility for those with disabilities; prevention of addictions and of course, keeping in touch with friends and family while making new ones too!

(Press release, ERoSH, 2005).

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<sup>28</sup> In 2006 Hairnet UK changed its name to 'Digital Unite' and changed its focus from working with older people to 'working with people who, for a variety of reasons, haven't had the opportunity to learn about computers and the Internet, and are increasingly 'getting left behind' as new devices for communication emerge'.

As I was in the final stages of completing this thesis it was announced that Digital Unite and Age Concern would be launching 'Silver Surfers Week' in 2006. For 2006 the week will run for the same week in May as ALW. New sponsors for this event will be BT, Intel, Microsoft, AOL, OFCOM and learndirect. It will be interesting to see how this initiative develops and how additional sponsorship from such high-profile private sector companies helps shape the initiative. In press statements (<http://www.silversurfer.org.uk/sponsors.html>), all four of the private sector companies stress that their sponsorship of the event links with their various 'corporate social responsibility' programmes.

Developments in both European and UK Government policy contexts have recently led to an increased focus on the notion of 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (CSR), and the development of a series of policy initiatives designed to persuade businesses of the benefits of such programmes. The European Commission describes CSR strategies thus:

'By stating their social responsibility and voluntarily taking on commitments which go beyond common regulatory and conventional requirements, which they would have to respect in any case, companies endeavour to raise the standards of social development, environmental protection and respect of fundamental rights and embrace an open governance, reconciling interests of various stakeholders in an overall approach of quality and sustainability'.

Through adopting CSR programmes, these businesses:

'... aim to send a signal to the various stakeholders with whom they interact: employees, shareholders, investors, consumers, public authorities and NGOs. In doing so, companies are investing in their future and they expect that the voluntary commitment they adopt will help to increase their profitability.'

(European Commission, 2001, p.3)

The UK Government, in line with the recommendations of the European Commission, has created a government department responsible for promoting CSR strategies, based within the Department for Trade and Industry, and has appointed a Minister for CSR, whose brief is to oversee development of policy in this area. Recent policy initiatives include the implementation of a programme of Community Investment tax relief for businesses, the formation of the Small Business Consortium and the development and sponsorship of the CSR Academy:

The CSR Academy is a resource for organisations of any size and sector wanting to develop their corporate social responsibility skills... The CSR Academy has developed the first CSR Competency Framework, a template designed to help managers integrate CSR within their organisation. The Academy offers introductory classes in using the Framework, in-house organisational development centred around the Framework and a variety of resources for companies committed to integrating CSR. In addition it is a source of information for CSR training and development opportunities within the UK.

(DTI, 2006)

At this early stage of these policy developments it is not possible to assess the impact that this focus on CSR might have on the provision of learning opportunities that seek to promote the wider benefits of learning. There would, however, appear to be the potential for providers to engage with this developing agenda, both in the sense of engaging directly with possible sources of funding through company CSR programmes, and in the sense of influencing the interests of companies through developing learning programmes that meet the needs of the CSR Academy.

### **7.3 ALW and learndirect**

In order to be able to observe the planning and preparation for ALW, I began my research at the centre in January 2003, and in order to explore further the reasons why the learners were using the learndirect centre I carried out 17 initial interviews with learners that focused on:

- how they became aware of the learndirect centre;
- what their reasons were for coming to the centre to learn;
- what previous experiences of learning were;
- what they liked/disliked about learning with learndirect;
- what they hoped to achieve in their learning; and,
- any plans they may have for the future.

I did follow up on these initial interviews, but these discussions tended to take place on a much more informal basis as I was helping a learner with a piece of work or just 'chatting' with the learners during the day<sup>29</sup>.

All of the learners had first heard about learndirect through the television advertising campaign. However, only two of the learners had come along to the centre as a direct result of the campaign with many others referring to the advertisement as 'silly' or 'stupid'<sup>30</sup>. The other interviewees came either because of the recommendation of a friend, 'to keep them company', or as a result of outreach work done by the learndirect staff. The staff have given presentations about learndirect at a women's refuge, a

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<sup>29</sup> During the pilot study I enrolled as a learner and studied a number of learndirect courses and I also assisted the centre coordinators in providing individual support to learners.

<sup>30</sup> At this time the advertisements for learndirect featured a man dressed up in rubber costume in the shape of hammer trying, unsuccessfully, to get into a phone box to make a call to get information about education and training opportunities.

residential facility for people with mental health problems and at various community centres.

The reasons for coming to the centre to learn were very mixed. Only six of the learners came in order to improve their skills in relation to employment. The majority of the learners did come to learn how to use the computers, with a special interest being in learning how to use the Internet. For those who were not acquiring these skills for employment related reasons, all but one gave the reason of wanting to be able to understand and communicate with younger members of the family who already had these skills. Only one interviewee, Madame O<sup>31</sup>, stated that 'I did it for my own self, no better reason than that'.

When the interviewees were asked about what they liked most about studying with learndirect all but one commented that they liked coming into the centre because of the friendly, relaxed atmosphere. They liked being able to interact with other learners. A response that was typical of many others was:

'All the other ladies that come here are learning... I got talking to someone when I was trying to find out how to do the printing... She helped me with that and since then she's shown me pictures of her grandchildren and we've had a chat about what we want to do in our futures and things like that. And that's how it starts and it is really good.'

(Doris, a learner<sup>32</sup>)

Illustrating perhaps the 'informal' nature of the learning taking place, only two of the participants had 'plans for future study', but all of the participants did say that they would like to carry on learning.

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<sup>31</sup> A pseudonym chosen by the participant

<sup>32</sup> As above



In planning events for ALW, practitioners working at the learndirect centre had a number of barriers to overcome if they were to present a broad range of activities. The first barrier was presented by the need to provide the evidence required to establish the 'audit trail' necessary to gain on-going funding of the Centre.

To use learndirect courses, learners need to complete the learndirect registration documents. Even for short introductory courses a considerable amount of forms need to be completed for the audit trail, a process rather at odds with the 'informal' emphasis of ALW. In order to overcome the restrictions imposed by this audit trail and deliver the activities for ALW in a more flexible manner the staff planned to make use of the resources provided through the UK Online initiative. These resources give learners the opportunity to try out various ICT applications without enrolling on a formal course and are designed to 'act as stepping stones to learndirect provision by providing basic ICT skills, confidence and motivation to progress to further learning' (DfES, 2003). The paperwork for this provision is much less than for the learndirect scheme: one form requiring details such as name and address, reasons for using the provision and future plans.

The UK Online initiative proved essential in providing flexibility in planning the events. As one of the co-ordinators at the centre commented, 'there would be little point in doing ALW if we just had the learndirect stuff; we couldn't do all the registrations and run the taster sessions'. At the same time it was coordinators' knowledge of the various initiatives and how they could be combined - their knowledge of how to 'make use of the system' - and their willingness to work around this barrier that meant certain activities could be presented during the Week. The willingness of the coordinators to put time and effort into overcoming this barrier suggests that they believe the ALW initiative to be of value.

One interesting aspect of the delivery of activities at the learndirect centre was the way in which the coordinators went about planning the activities. The members of staff employed to manage the day-to-day activities in this learndirect centre are employed as 'learndirect coordinators' and as such are not necessarily expected to have any formal or accredited experience in teaching or training. The rationale behind this is that learndirect maintain that all the teaching and learning activities are contained within the courses and should not require any additional input. On-line tutoring is available for all learners, and learners with disabilities or learning difficulties can have face-to-face support from a trained tutor on the recommendation of the special needs co-ordinator as a result of an assessment process.

When I asked the members of staff about their roles in relation to teaching and learning they were all adamant that teaching was not part of their job, but that 'facilitating learning' was. This was an interesting distinction and, although there is not space in this chapter to address this, it raises issues of what it is a 'teacher' does and what 'teaching' involves. In the context of this discussion it meant that the staff involved in planning the activities did not have a great deal of experience in designing learning activities.

The approach that the staff took to designing the activities for ALW was to look through the ALW promotional material and choose themes and initiatives that reflected current learning interests they were engaged in outside of the learndirect environment, the learning they are required to engage in as part of the development of new learning packages by learndirect and the requirements for continuing professional development (CPD) made by the management of the Learning Resources Centre where the learndirect centre is based.

For example:

- The sessions that used the Photoshop programme were organised by a member of staff with an interest in the visual arts and experience of promoting the visual arts as part of her previous employment as a youth worker.
- The session based on family learning built on the work of a member of staff involved as a volunteer in a community-based learning scheme.
- The financial literacy<sup>33</sup> theme was linked to a session based around the learndirect programme 'Cash Crescent'.
- 'The Learning at Work Day' was linked to a new learndirect package relating to new legislation about the provision of services to people with disabilities. Members of staff from around the campus were encouraged to come to the Centre and look at the programme as part of their CPD requirements.

Promotion and advertising of ALW in general was problematic for the staff at the Centre. The college made no funds available for the promotion of ALW by the Centre. The reason given was that the timing of the initiative did not tie in with normal recruitment patterns of the college. Advertising and promotion of the events could only take place on the notice board allotted to the learndirect Centre and via the college Intranet, but staff at the centre did make use of the free promotional material supplied by NIACE and used the 'ALW Calendar of Events'<sup>34</sup> to advertise their activities.

Promotion of the activities for ALW held at the centre was very much by 'word of mouth'. Tutors who support learners with special educational needs were informed

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<sup>33</sup> 'Financial literacy' was a new area that was introduced as part of the 'skills for life' theme in 2003. I will discuss this in more detail in the next chapter.

<sup>34</sup> On the NIACE website there is an online calendar where practitioners can enter and promote your Adult Learners' Week events free of charge. All the Adult Learners' Week promotional material directs people to this website.

about the events and agreed to ask the learners if they would like to take part in a taster session outside of their usual learning programme. learndirect centre staff had been involved in the development of an outreach programme to promote learndirect services in places such as a women's refuge and a mental health facility, and the ALW events were promoted through the contacts made as part of this outreach programme.

Once again, the enthusiasm for ALW from the centre coordinators, and their persistence in overcoming barriers to providing activities, suggests that the coordinators valued the broader objectives of the initiative. The way in which learners engaged with the planned activities also suggests an enthusiasm for the type of learning that extended beyond the narrow version of the 'skills for life' agenda that focuses on acquiring skills for paid employment.

For example, many of the learners were already involved in one way or another with the learndirect centre and yet the ALW activities allowed them to engage with different aspects of learning. Thus, Madame O has completed a number of different courses with learndirect. She regularly visits the Centre several days a week, and also contributes to the Centre newsletter. During ALW she used the scanner to add images to recipes she was contributing to the newsletter. Madame O said that it was 'good to learn these extra things'. I sat with her as she scanned images into her document. She treated her frustrated attempts to get the image the correct way up with good humour: 'I don't mind me mistakes if there's no-one breathing down my neck'.

The usual environment of the learndirect Centre is relatively relaxed compared with, for example, a classroom. During ALW, the atmosphere appeared even more conducive to learners trying new activities that included using new technology. A scan of the daily activity sheets for ALW showed that use of the scanner and the digital camera were

amongst the most popular activities. Most of the learners used this equipment for their contributions to the newsletter. Whilst many of the learners may have eventually used this equipment, ALW provided an opportunity to try out this equipment.

Another group of learners were people who had come to enquire about the learndirect centre rather than specifically to take part in ALW. The fact that the sessions for ALW were running meant that these prospective learners could be offered a taster session different from the usual programmes available to new learners such as a 'Skills for Life' assessment programme and the 'learndirect experience'. One learner commented that she had intended to find out about learndirect for some time and, although it was coincidental that she had visited during ALW, she felt that had ALW been advertised 'it might have made me come in anyway. You know what its like. You put stuff off. Knowing that there might be others who were there for the first time would have encouraged me'.

Another group of participants were learners being assessed for special needs support within the college who had been encouraged to 'have a go' at an activity during ALW and see what facilities were on offer. The member of staff responsible for the special needs assessment commented, 'It was good to be able to offer something other than the assessment programmes. They are good programmes, we still need the learner to complete them, but at least we didn't have to make them jump the hurdle straight away'.

These examples of the process of planning for and delivering activities for ALW in the learndirect centre illustrate further the relationship between the national and regional elements of Adult Learners' Week. In other examples of this strand I have emphasised how this relationship has provided evidence which enables NIACE to further its

advocacy work at a national level. In this example I have illustrated how that advocacy work can affect learning provision at a much more 'local' level. The initial connection between the practitioners working at this learndirect centre and ALW had come through the 'Silver Surfer of the Year' awards and some of the practitioners had knowledge of NIACE through its involvement in the Adult and Community Learning Fund (ACLF), which is discussed in more detail in the next chapter. As a result of these connections these practitioners had become aware of the other aspects of the initiative. Although working in an environment which aims to deliver learning within a relatively narrow remit, with a lack of formal training in designing learning activities outside of this remit and compounded by a lack of support by the institution in which the centre is based, these practitioners delivered a range of activities that linked to different aspects of Adult Learners' Week.

Although it might be difficult to capture the effect of these activities in a way that could be generalised beyond the experiences of those learners who took part, this example does illustrate how the values and aims of ALW, as expressed in the themes and issues it seeks to promote, have the potential to influence practice. In Chapter 7 I discussed the issue of how the way in which learning provision is evaluated, the focus on measuring 'what works', may be disguising weaknesses in the system of provision. What might also be being lost in current systems for evaluating provision is the way in which practitioners adapt the resources available to meet the needs of learners. The practitioners I spoke to discussed at length about the audit trails required by Ufi and how the required documentation affected their practice. However, there did not seem to be any formal system of evaluation in place that recognised that both practitioners and the learners themselves might influence the way in which the learning resources made available were put to use.

## **7.4 Summary and Conclusion**

The ALW theme of 'Equality and diversity' is used to highlight specific issues relating to barriers to participation in learning – issues that are evidenced through the NIACE annual survey of adult participation in learning. This theme is used to articulate issues relating to achieving equal access for all adults to learning opportunities. At the same time, the theme is used to highlight the diverse range of learning provision that would be required to achieve that equality of access.

In this chapter, I have explored two aspects of participation that have recently been the focus of Government policy priorities – the participation in learning by older people and the need to provide access to ICT and opportunities to learn the necessary skills to make use of these technologies.

The examples I have discussed provide further illustrations of the process of micromanipulation, and these can be related to the four strands of the framework discussed in Chapter 5.

### ***Building Partnerships***

The 'Silver Surfers' Day' initiative provides a good example of the way in which the wider notion of learning promoted through ALW has the potential to engage organisations whose primary purpose is not education provision, and how this engagement can enhance NIACE's advocacy work. The partnerships that were formed in the development of this focus day, and then built on to extend the initiative to create the 'Silver Surfers' Week', also demonstrate how ALW can provide further opportunities

for different groups and organisations to work in partnership, with ALW acting as the 'matchmaker' that brings together these shared interests.

'Silver Surfers' Day' began as a partnership between NIACE and Hairnet UK. Although Hairnet UK was an organisation primarily concerned with learning provision, they lacked the resources to build partnerships with such organisations as Age Concern and EROSH, organisations that worked with the groups of people that they saw as potential participants. NIACE and ALW provided the knowledge and expertise, and the opportunity, for Hairnet UK to extend their provision.

The extension of the initiative into 'Silver Surfers' Week', and the involvement of new corporate sponsors, provides an example of how one aspect of building partnerships might develop further in the future. Whilst policy developments relating to the promotion of CSR programmes are still in their early stages, there would appear to be the potential to engage with this additional source of funding. Whilst the needs and interests of private corporations will always be to increase their profitability, if they are willing to 'invest' in this way in order to 'reconcile the interests of various stakeholders', then it is important that the role that learning might play in that potential investment is articulated as broadly as possible. I will discuss a further example of the possible benefits of this type of partnership in Chapter Nine.

Another example of the way in which ALW has been used to build partnerships with other organisations, and how these partnerships can then enhance NIACE's advocacy role within the more formal policy-making process, is provided by the example of the partnerships between NIACE and the Carnegie UK Trust.



### ***Influencing policy***

In this chapter I discussed the research findings published during ALW and national conferences held during ALW were used to support NIACE's call for the National Participation Targets to include a target aimed specifically at increasing the participation in learning by older people. I also outlined how these events and activities were linked to the Carnegie Inquiry into the Third Age, and how this led to funding to develop the 'Older and Bolder' project. This special interest group contributes to NIACE responses to policy documents, but also provides information and guidance to practitioners involved in learning provision for older learners. These partnerships with practitioners then, in turn, provide case studies which help inform and enhance NIACE's advocacy work.

The publication of NIACE's annual survey of adult participation during ALW has provided NIACE with an opportunity to use the publicity generated by ALW to draw attention to the survey findings. Although the findings are used to highlight issues relating to equality of access for specific categories of learner, for example by gender, socio-economic grouping, age, the findings are also used to advocate solutions to issues that cut across these categories. The barriers to participation caused by lack of access to ICT and lack of access to provision designed to help people develop the skills necessary to use ICT have been highlighted in NIACE surveys. In this chapter I explored some of the ways in which the use of ICT has been linked to events and activities during ALW. These examples have illustrated how the benefits of ICT learning can extend beyond developing skills appropriate for the 'world of work', and similar examples have been used to illustrate NIACE's attempts to influence policy developments in this area. In chapter nine I will explore some of these policy developments in more detail, looking specifically at the areas of financial literacy and media literacy.

### ***Acting as a critical friend.***

In this chapter I have discussed the developments brought about by a growing awareness of the impact that changes in demographic patterns will have on various areas of Government policy and also on the 'world of work'. Employers, or to be more specific the organisations like the Sector Skills Agencies that represent their interests within the post-compulsory education, seem to be not yet engaging fully with the demands these changing demographic patterns will bring. NIACE continues to promote approaches to learning that hold the possibility of engaging with, and overcoming, these issues, and events and activities for ALW are used to highlight the success of these approaches and to promote examples of 'good practice'.

### ***The mutual benefits of the national/local relationship.***

In this chapter I looked in detail at one example of how a group of practitioners based in a learndirect centre planned for and delivered activities for ALW 2004. Using this example I have illustrated how the broader, inclusive notion of learning, as articulated within the ALW initiative, has the potential to engage practitioners and seem relevant to the work that they do.

In this particular example NIACE provided support for the practitioners in the sense that the ALW promotional literature provided them with examples and ideas for learning activities that they could relate to the particular learning environment in which they worked. NIACE also provided free advertising and promotional materials. The ALW award nominations gave them the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of learners who used the centre. In turn, these practitioners made use of their contacts with other communities and encouraged people within these communities to participate in learning. By taking part in the evaluation of ALW, including returning quantitative

data about the activities that took place, and in nominating learners for ALW awards, these practitioners provided NIACE with the information that they need to continue with their promotional and advocacy work.

If the purpose of widening participation policies is to, as Alan Tuckett put it, 'recognise who isn't there and to do something about it', then the recent attention paid to the issues of participation by older learners and the impact of ICT on learning would appear to represent positive attempts to widen participation. On the other hand, when the underlying rationale for these interventions continues to be to meet the needs of the 'world of work', then there is a danger that such policies will undermine a more inclusive notion of the role of participation in learning. The examples discussed raise a number of concerns and issues.

- Despite the acknowledgement in policy documents of need to address a broad range of issues relating to 'an ageing society'
  - Current plans for the provision of work-related learning, as reflected in the development of sector skills agreements, do not address the need for such provision.
  - Changes in Government funding priorities, as reflected in the Government's current 'Skills Strategy' have focused funding on achieving targets set for attainment in basic skills. Given the limited funding available, this may lead to a decrease in funding for informal learning that aims to develop the wider benefits of learning.
- Recent Government policies have focused attention on the need to provide opportunities for adults to access ICT and to develop their ability to make use of ICT.
  - Although Government policy articulates the value of such learning as not being solely related to gaining and maintaining skills necessary for paid

employment, the focus of learndirect, who are the main providers of ICT learning opportunities, prioritises employment related learning.

- Systems for evaluation seem to be more focused on 'audit trails' rather than on gaining an understanding of the ways in which people make use of the resources available. Where flexibility exists, for example through provision of resources available through the UK Online initiative, there doesn't appear to be any system for capturing the way in which practitioners make use of this flexibility in the system.

I will return to these issues and discuss them in relation to the broader concerns of inclusion and participation in the final chapter of this thesis.

## **Chapter Eight: Skills for Life**

### **8.1 Introduction**

On its website, the Department of Education and Skills describes 'skills for life' as 'the ability to read, write and speak in English and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function at work and in society in general'. Provision relating to this particular interpretation of 'skills for life', often referred to as 'basic skills', has been one of the priorities for funding within the post compulsory sector for a number of years. For example, in 1991 this provision was included within the category of 'education for adults' and, as such, this provision was to be a part of the reformed post-compulsory sector within the remit of the FEFC. Approaches to delivery were, however, constrained by the requirements of the FEFC and the separation of Schedule2/Non-schedule 2 provision.

In Chapter 5 I discussed how the activities and events organised for ALW 1992 continued to emphasise the importance of recognising the particular requirements of adult learners. I highlighted the argument that encouraging adult learners to participate would require more than a supply-led approach that did not recognise the diverse motivations that adults may have for participating in learning and the types of support and guidance that they might require in order to overcome barriers to participation. It was argued that the stigma that can be attached to having poor literacy and numeracy skills meant that there was a particular requirement to recognise the complexity of these barriers to participation when formulating policy relating to this type of provision.

Examples of basic skills provision that were highlighted during the early years of the ALW initiative, via ALW awards or the allocation of 'seed money', emphasised the need to provide learning in non-traditional settings; approaches that integrated basic skills

learning in other types of learning, for example learning that relates to hobbies; and adopting a 'motivational' approach – 'making people think it's something that's fun, it's enjoyable, it's something they will do and they'll find out about' (Kate Malone).

In Chapter 6, I discussed the changes in education policy that brought about the end of the Schedule 2/Non-Schedule 2 distinction and introduced a new system of post-16 provision. Basic skills provision, however, was also affected by broader policy developments relating specifically to the notion of 'neighbourhood renewal' and the work of the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU).

One of the first reports published by the SEU was the 'National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal' (SEU, 1998c). The purpose of this report was to outline how the SEU would:

"develop integrated and sustainable approaches to the problems of the worst housing estates, including crime, drugs, unemployment, community breakdown, and bad schools etc".

(p.2)

The report proposed that 18 Policy Action Teams (PATs) should be established, each focusing on a specific area of policy development, and that the recommendations of the PATs would provide the basis for future policy development. Although each of the PATs was to be led by a government department, the report also proposed that they should consult with 'outside experts and people working in deprived areas to ensure the recommendations were evidence-based and reality-tested' (SEU, 2000, p.5). The focus for PAT 2 was 'Skills', and NIACE was one of the organisations represented on the PAT 2 Consultative Group.

In section 8.2. I will outline the findings and recommendations of PAT 2 and discuss how these relate to the approach to basic skills provision that NIACE has promoted through its advocacy work and highlighted through the ALW initiative. I will then move on to discuss the Adult and Community Learning Fund Project, which was managed on behalf of the DfEE by NIACE and the Basic Skills Agency (BSA). Although not directly linked to ALW, this project is relevant to this thesis for a number of reasons.

In their evaluation of the ACLF, commissioned by the DfEE, Field et al (2001) comment on the way in which this project was a departure from the established process of policy implementation:

‘As a competitive challenge fund, the ACLF is unusual in that its management is contracted to two intermediary bodies. BSA and NIACE were selected because each had a unique expertise that was not available within DfEE.’

(p.80)

Throughout this thesis I have emphasised the way in which claims of ‘expertise’ have been significant in terms of both identifying and pursuing ‘spaces for challenge’, and I have highlighted how the ALW initiative has played a part in demonstrating that expertise. In Section 8.2. I will discuss how these areas of expertise enabled NIACE, in partnership with the BSA, to:

‘...exploit their existing reservoirs of networks and goodwill in the field, but also to go beyond their current constituencies in making contact with many groups and organisations who did not initially see themselves as concerned professionally or otherwise with adult learning’.

(Field et. al., p.5)

Furthermore, the ACLF project was delivered during a period of transition and upheaval within the post-compulsory sector. The proposals contained within the Green Paper 'The Learning Age', which had included the original proposal for the ACLF, were progressing through the consultation and legislative process; the SEU Policy Action Teams were putting forward their recommendations for implementation across Government departments; and, in the latter years of the project, the newly-formed LSC was developing its Adult Literacy and Numeracy Delivery Plan.

Throughout this process the ACLF project was providing examples of practice that supported arguments advocating the effectiveness of basic skills provision that was integrated into other forms of learning and delivered in non-traditional or community settings. Learning that could be said to be 'embedded' not only in other learning activities, but 'embedded' in the communities and settings that potential learners found most accessible.

As discussed in chapter 6, analysis of policy documents relating to this period of change would suggest that, at least in part, the 'argument had been won'. As I have also highlighted previously, however, policy priorities have begun to shift once again. In concluding section 8.2. I will use recent examples from ALW to illustrate how the claims to expertise that were reinforced in the delivery of the ACLF, and the extension of the networks of support, have enabled NIACE and its partners to be ideally placed to continue their advocacy work in relation to this area of provision.

One significant difference between the DfES interpretation of 'skills for life' and the ALW theme is that the latter extends the concept to include ICT related skills and the notions of financial literacy and media literacy. The emergence of the notions of



financial literacy and media literacy, and their development as areas of adult learning, can again be linked to the work of the SEU Policy Action Teams.

In section 8.3 I will look first at the notion of financial literacy and how this is linked to the work of the PAT 14 (Access to financial services). PAT 14 interpreted the term 'access' as including both the provision of services into local communities and the development of the knowledge and skills necessary to make use of such services. I will then discuss the various policy developments, including the way in which the Financial Services Authority (FSA) has developed policies to fulfill its statutory duty to promote financial literacy, that have influenced the development of a curriculum for financial literacy provision. Finally I will outline how events and activities for ALW, specifically the 'Money Matters to Me' initiative, have been used to promote NIACE's engagement with this emerging policy agenda.

I will then turn my attention to the development of the notion of media literacy and how this is linked to the work of the PAT 15 (Closing the digital divide). The significance of the work of this PAT is that it considered access to an extended range of ICTs including, for example, developments in the provision of digital television services. Once again the development of policies by a regulatory authority outside of the sphere of education policy, in this instance the Office of Communications (Ofcom), has had a considerable impact in the way in which a curriculum is being developed for this area of provision. I will then examine how the ALW initiative has been used to raise awareness of these developments in adult learning.

In the final section of this chapter I will discuss how the examples explored in this chapter relate to the framework for analysis that I outlined in Chapter 5.

## **8.2 Embedding 'basic skills'**

The remit of the 'skills' PAT was to examine and report on:

- the key skills gaps that need to be addressed in poor neighbourhoods to help those who are unemployed, in intermittent or unskilled employment, or lack basic skills and self-confidence;
- how well institutions such as Training and Enterprise Councils, Further Education colleges, adult education services, schools and libraries meet these needs and whether there are any changes that would be cost-effective;
- how well alternative methods (e.g. informal learning, outreach units, IT and distance learning) work to motivate adults to re-engage in education and training, and how good practice could be spread better.

(p.10)

Whilst the language used in this remit still emphasises the economic rationale, with the focus on the 'world of work' and the cost-effectiveness of provision, there is also a clear recognition that current mainstream provision may not be meeting the needs of adult learners. Furthermore, in defining the scope of the remit the PAT did pose the question 'Skills for what?', and stated explicitly that, whilst basic skills were essential in terms of gaining paid employment, they also had broader role in people's lives:

'their capacity to understand, take part in and contribute to the wider society in which they live; their status within that society; their sense of self; the quality of their relationships with other members of their family and their local community; and on their ability to give their children effective support in school, in the transition from school to work and in further learning.'

(p. 26).

The final report of the PAT SEU (1999) highlighted the need to recognise how previous experiences of education might impact on the motivation to participate in further learning. Some of the key findings of the PAT Team were that:

- education and training for adults is often physically remote, intimidating or otherwise difficult for socially disadvantaged people to access;
- not enough is done to engage adults in disadvantaged communities in learning;
- not enough is done to provide 'first-rung' provision that can help people with low self-confidence or motivation to take the first few steps back into learning. Such provision can take any number of forms – examples might include first aid, child care or local history. What is important is that it engages local people's interests and helps them to see how learning might be relevant to them;

p.12

Echoing the argument put forward by NIACE and its partners since the implementation of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Bill, the report states that Government policy of recent years has led to 'a significant mismatch between the provision that is available and what is actually needed' (p.13). The report recommends that the DfEE sets the newly-formed LSCs the strategic objective of improving the system for 'first rung' provision. The report also recommends that the DfEE should 'revise its funding programmes and practices with a view to creating a funding and regulatory environment that allows for more community-generated initiative and enterprise', and that The Home Office and HM Treasury should 'together take the lead on the development of a code of good practice for Government funding programmes that are relevant to the community and voluntary organisations' (p.18). One project that seemed to exemplify how these proposed changes in the funding and regulatory environment should be implemented was the ACLF.

### 8.2.1 Adult and Community Learning Fund

As already mentioned, the ACLF was unusual in that the management of the fund was devolved to NIACE and the BSA. This arrangement was announced in the Green Paper 'The Learning Age', and the arrangement was not a result of any public tender process. The partnership between the two organisations was not, however, a new development. When ALW was launched in 1992 the main government-funded agency, whose remit it was to advise the Government in relation to the provision of basic skills learning, was the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU). This agency, although funded by the Government, was not part of the formal structure of government, being a Limited Company by guarantee and a registered charity. ALBSU, and its predecessors the Adult Literacy Resource Agency and the Adult Literacy Unit, had originally been established as autonomous units of NIACE, only becoming a separate legal entity in 1991. In 1994-95 the Government undertook a review of the work of ALBSU, and in 1995 the remit of the agency was extended to include work with children and schools. The agency's name was changed to the Basic Skills Agency (BSA). The Board of Management, the Advisory Committee and the Post-16 Advisory Group of the BSA include representatives from NIACE.

The ACLF had an original budget of £20 million, which was later increased to £30 million in order to extend the initiative for a further year. The aims of the ACLF included:

- Engaging new learners into a range of opportunities.
- Improving basic skills.
- Developing capacity in community-based organisations to deliver learning opportunities.

- Building partnerships involving local people, community organisations, and voluntary organisations with education providers.

As can be seen from these aims, basic skills provision was not the sole focus of the project, but 66% of the projects did involve learning that was aimed explicitly at addressing basic skills needs. In total 616 projects were supported through the ACLF, with funding lasting from six months to three years and ranging from £2000 to £100,000.<sup>35</sup>

In their evaluation of the first four rounds of ACLF projects, Field et. al. (2001) state that their key findings for the project overall were that:

1. the Fund has widened individual participation as was intended,
2. the Fund has contributed towards new ways of improving basic skills, and
3. a much wider group of organisations has got involved, going far beyond the 'usual suspects' and promoting a rich harvest of non-standard approaches to teaching.

(p.2)

Throughout evaluation reports of the ACLF, both those produced by NIACE and those produced by outside researchers, there is a good deal of emphasis on the way in which the ACLF 'raises awareness', both in individual learners and practitioners, of the opportunities available. Similarly, reports emphasised the way in which the ACLF 'builds capacity' in terms of developing the expertise within organisations to negotiate access to funding for learning programmes and the ability to deliver them.

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<sup>35</sup> I do not intend to examine any individual ACLF projects in this thesis, but further details of the projects funded and evaluation can be found in Tyers and Aston, 2004 (evaluation of fund carried out by The Institute of Employment Studies for NIACE/BSA) and Field et. al., 2001 (evaluation of fund carried out by University of Warwick for the DfEE).

In addition to the innovative approach to the management of the project, the ACLF broke with 'the norm' in that there was an explicit attempt to remove the 'audit culture' that often constrains the way in which projects can be delivered. The Prospectus for the Fund stated that:

'We understand that innovation may entail an element of risk<sup>36</sup> – especially where the activity centres on efforts to involve people that are wary of learning – but a calculated gamble may be worth taking if the potential benefits are significant'

(as quoted in Field et. al, 2001, p.89)

In March 2003 I interviewed Jan Eldred, NIACE ACLF Development Officer, and we discussed the balance between the processes needed to safeguard the spending of public funds and the desire to promote innovative approaches. Describing the approach taken to explaining this balance to fund-holders during an induction session, she said:

"What we are saying is that the end date doesn't change, the balance of capital and revenue doesn't change - but what you're saying is we thought we were going to spend a lot of money on travel, and hey, what we've found is that people get themselves here, they don't want the travel, but what we do need is more crèche time ... So there are those robust systems in place, it's transparent, this is how we've spent the money, in the interests of this particular goal, working with this particular community of people and these particular activities, but within it we've tried to enable that creativity and responsiveness because, what I say is, we want you to learn how to do it so that we can learn how to do it, and tell other people".

When emphasising the importance of being able to adopt this approach, she said:

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<sup>36</sup> When commenting on this element of 'calculated risk' Field et al (2001, p.95) state that 'we have found no evidence of abuse arising from this, and the approach should continue to inform investment in innovation'.

“But if you really are pushing new territory you will do that. If it's tried and tested, if you're not taking the risks, then you won't actually widen participation. You won't find those creative and innovative ideas”

In previous chapters I have discussed the issue of how an ‘audit trail’ approach to evaluation constrains the way in which projects can be delivered. I also highlighted how, when practitioners seek to overcome those constraints with innovative approaches, the systems of evaluation can fail to capture these processes. With the flexibility built into the ACLF there was the opportunity to not only capture ‘what works’, but the complex way in which projects are made to work.

Another issue raised in previous chapters is the way in which information about policy funding priorities can fail to filter through to practitioners, and as a result opportunities for funding learning are not fully exploited. Commenting on ways in which she felt that the ACLF was successful in this aspect of ‘capacity building’ Jan Eldred said:

‘it was engaging providers of adult learning who couldn't, haven't, necessarily seen the way forward for them to get funding for what they want to do... nor did they feel that they had the power to do it. If you're talking to a big FE college and you're just a small drugs project that works in a neighbourhood, you know, what's the language you use?... a lot of projects are run by the voluntary sector and they can't get to sit at the table of the LSC. They couldn't sit with the FEFC and they don't know how to access LSC funding because it's not clear how the voluntary, community sector can do that. Because the LSCs don't know how to engage this diverse and disparate sector... I mean, the problem is on both sides. But that's the frustration so they'd say yeah the money is there and we're ticking all the boxes which say we should have it but it isn't happening!’

Jan Eldred also pointed out that that it was not only the initial funding for these projects, but being able to give advice on what opportunities were available, that made the ACLF so effective:

'So they could go to the learning institutions and say 'we have some money and what we'd like to be doing is helping to people access something of what your are offering'. And I think those institutions that heard that, actively listened, were then able to hear 'well here's an opportunity for us to work with this drugs project in a way that we've been trying to do or that we'd thought about doing'

This process would appear to have been successful in that three quarters of the projects were able to continue their work once the funding from the ACLF had finished.

In the conclusion of their report, Field et. al. commented that:

Without creating unnecessary bureaucracy, it should be possible for the Learning and Skills Council to build on this expertise and draw on it ensuring that the type of work currently undertaken by the Fund continues to evolve and develop.

(p.104)

When the LSC produced its Adult Literacy and Numeracy Delivery Plan in 2002 it did include plans to work with community-based voluntary organisations in an attempt to build the capacity to deliver basic skills learning in community settings, and plans to increase 'integrated provision' in an attempt to make basic skills learning more relevant to learners. NIACE's response to the Delivery Plan welcomed 'the clear understanding that, whilst the LSC is the main funder of basic skills, other agencies have relevant expertise and can help reach the groups identified in the Government's wider Skills for Life strategy' (NIACE, 2002, p.1). In the next subsection I will outline some recent projects, which have been promoted through the ALW initiative, which provide examples of how NIACE has put that 'relevant expertise' to use.



### 8.2.2 Raising awareness and building capacity.

As part of ALW 2004 NIACE launched its 'Numbers in Everything' campaign, which was supported by the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit<sup>37</sup> of the DFES, and the ESF. Providers were encouraged to link ALW events and activities to this campaign and NIACE provided guidance and promotional materials for these numeracy events. The guidance focused on how practitioners might work in partnership with other organisations; suggestions as to venues that might be used to emphasise the informal nature of the events; and, the kinds of activities that might motivate learners to follow up on further, more formal, numeracy learning. Promotion of the campaign included posters in one thousand train stations in England illustrating how to 'do' the nine times table using your hands (see Appendix E). Providers could order similar free advertising and promotional materials for their events. The campaign was also publicised through two supplements in national publications, The Daily Mirror ('Hands Up if You Don't Like Maths', 13<sup>th</sup> May 2004) and the Times Educational Supplement (TES) (Adult Learners: Odds on to succeed', 14<sup>th</sup> May 2004).

Both of the supplements contained stories of ALW award winners and examples of 'maths tricks', including the nine times table example. Both supplements also contained articles on the value of numeracy skills in 'applied' situations. In the case of the Daily Mirror supplement these took the form of endorsements from celebrities such as Carol Vorderman and Andy 'The Viking' Fordham, the then World Darts Champion, writing about the way in which numeracy skills can be applied in 'real life' situations. The TES supplement focused on links between numeracy skills and what was referred to in the supplement as 'active citizenship'. Examples used to illustrate this concept were the ability and confidence to help children with their homework; the role of numeracy skills

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<sup>37</sup> The Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit has been renamed and is now called the Skills for Life Strategy Unit

in ensuring health and safety at work; and, in contrast, links between innumeracy, poverty, debt and 'life on the fringes of society' (p6).

The TES supplement also contained articles on teaching methods, which in turn were linked to research concerning the effectiveness of teaching methods which embedded numeracy skills in other learning programmes. Examples given related to embedding numeracy skills in informal learning and job-related learning.

This article was linked to the findings of a survey carried out by NIACE and TES, and which will be repeated as part of ALW 2006, looking at levels of staffing on basic skills programmes and the training available. The commentary that accompanied these findings argued that staff shortages in this area of provision, and lack of training available to staff working in this area, meant that the objectives contained within the Government's Skills Strategy White Paper were unlikely to be achieved.

Both the Daily Mirror and TES supplements contained details of current initiatives that provide free learning opportunities for improving numeracy skills and resources for practitioners involved in basic skills provision, for example the Government's 'Get On' Campaign and the BBC's 'Skillswise' Campaign. Both supplements also gave contact details for further help and advice – the free learndirect helpline number and the website address for NIACE's online calendar of local ALW events.

In the review of ALW 2004 NIACE announced that the Campaigns and Promotions Team had received funding from the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit to continue 'awareness-raising' numeracy campaigns. The announcement highlighted the way in which the ALW initiative had influenced the funding bid:

‘The heart of our proposal was to build on the range of informal community-based networks which NIACE and its Adult Learners’ Week partners use, in order to take Skills for Life to faith institutions, working men’s clubs and community organisations of all sorts’

(NIACE, 2004, p.30)

Four other campaigns, funded by the Skills for Life Strategy Unit and the LSC, were run by NIACE during 2005, and these campaigns were promoted during ALW 2005:

- ‘Write Where You Are’ – a campaign that focused on using creative writing as a way of promoting interest in developing literacy skills. The campaign website provided a similar mix of advice and promotional materials to providers as the previous year’s numeracy campaign.
- An ESOL Outreach Research Campaign – research with the Indian community in Leicester, the Pakistani community in Bradford, the Bangladeshi community in Tower Hamlets and the Somali community in Ealing and Southall about learner participation and learner preferences. The findings of this research will be used to compile guidance to providers on how to promote learning activities.
- Homeless Campaign – working with shelters, hostels and other support organisations NIACE produced a learners’ pack focusing on advice for homeless people about learning opportunities, and again including stories of ALW award winners.
- Offender Learning Campaign – NIACE worked with The Offenders’ Learning and Skills Unit (OLSU) to produce a learner pack and promotional materials. The learners’ packs included stories of offenders, who were ALW awards winners, explaining how they had benefited from learning. The learner packs also contained a CD which contained guidance, compiled by offenders,

concerning 'skills for life' and how these skills impacted on keeping in contact with family members, health and fitness.

These projects all highlight the way in which ALW is used to highlight the 'awareness-raising' work that NIACE is carrying out, but they also demonstrate the way in which this work leads to 'capacity-building' activities. For example, in 2003 the OLSU consulted NIACE with regards to establishing an 'Offender Learning Champions' scheme and promoting a 'National Learning Day for Prisons', both of which would be linked to ALW. These contacts led to NIACE being asked to provide information packs about their work to the Annual Conference of the Heads of Learning and Skills within the Prison Service. NIACE was also asked to consider co-opting practitioners from within the Prison Service onto the regional steering groups for ALW and to advise the OLSU on how to obtain additional funding for informal learning programmes from alternative sources, for example the ESF (Report on meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2003, NIACE Archives).

Despite the increased funding for the delivery of basic skills learning programmes that focus on informal learning in non-traditional settings, the picture is not an entirely positive one. In their summary of NIACE's involvement in Basic Skills initiatives Peter Lavender (Director for Research, Development and Information) and Chris Taylor (Basic Skills Development Officer) welcomed the increased funding that has been made available, but they also stated that:

'Practitioners are discouraged by the cycle of special short term funding, the constant round of bidding for work which has been proven to be successful. The 'bidding fatigue' brought about by short term funding has to be addressed by the Learning and Skills Council and the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit.'

(p.2).

There is little sign of the short term nature of funding being addressed by Government. Additionally, the changes in funding priorities that prompted the launch of the 'Fairer Funding for Adult Learning Campaign', which I outlined in the Part Three Commentary section, present the possibility that even short-term funding for this area of provision might be reduced.

### **8.3 Emerging 'skills for life'**

Whilst the debates around the provision of basic skills are well-established, those surrounding the two areas I will discuss in this section are very much examples of 'work in progress'. Indeed both of these areas illustrate the way in which the themes of ALW have been adapted to highlight emerging issues and concerns.

#### **8.3.1 Financial literacy**

The remit for the PAT 14 was to examine the issue of how best to widen access to financial services. The PAT was asked to look specifically at:

- the scope for development of credit unions, building on planned legislative change;
- increasing the availability of insurance services to deprived communities;
- the role of retail banks, Post Offices and other organisations in providing access to and delivery of financial services in deprived neighbourhoods.'

(SEU, 1999, p.8)

In this context, the notion of 'access to' was interpreted not simply as ensuring that there was local provision of services, but that people should be given the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to make use of these services. With this in mind, the PAT report contained recommendations that both HM Treasury and the DfEE should examine the best ways to ensure that the necessary provision was developed. HM Treasury's response focused on ensuring that the Financial Services Association (FSA)<sup>38</sup>, which had been given the statutory duty to promote public understanding of the financial system, developed this aspect of their responsibilities. The FSA published a strategy document (FSA, 1999) stating that it planned to:

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<sup>38</sup> The Financial Services Authority (FSA) is an independent non-governmental body that regulates the financial services industry in the UK.

‘develop educational programmes and the provision of generic information and advice on financial services. On the adult education front, the FSA is researching where people go for advice and information at present; and is developing short modular courses on financial literacy for use in adult education or with other partners.’

(p.3)

The DfEE response was to set-up the Adult Financial Literacy Advisory Group (AdFLAG) to report on the ways in which provision of financial literacy learning could be improved. The AdFLAG report, which was published in 2000, highlighted the importance of recognising that:

‘Use of and access to financial services raises questions of both supply and demand. There has been much work to begin to address the supply of appropriate products including the Social Exclusion Unit Policy Action Team 14 report. However, people need to be equipped with the skills, knowledge and confidence to ensure they make informed judgments and take effective decisions regarding their own financial circumstances.’

(p.3)

The report states that the FSA should be the ‘lead agency’ in relation to the development of financial literacy programmes, but the report also recommends that:

‘The Basic Skills Agency and NIACE, the national organisation for adult learning, draw on lessons from ACLF and the Basic Skills Community Fund to develop a financial literacy programme which:-

- Reaches and engages adults who are financially excluded and have limited basic skills.
- Will be located in local communities.
- Will provide individual teaching, home learning and intensive short courses in basic skills and financial education.
- Will build the capacity of community and voluntary organisations.
- Develop and pilot models that are cost effective and easily replicable.’

This could be done in partnership with organisations, such as, the FSA as they are seeking to work in partnership on projects which will enable the financially excluded and those with poor skills to improve financial literacy skills. Also, it will be for the Learning and Skills Council to consider how this is replicated and delivered locally.

(p.24)

The report contained a further recommendation that the DfEE should work in partnership with NIACE to develop programmes that addressed the needs of older people. This work was carried out through the 'Older and Bolder' project discussed earlier.

NIACE's response (2001) was to welcome some of the recommendations, for example the recommendation that the LSC was to ensure that there was local provision of financial literacy programmes. NIACE voiced concern, however, at the way in which financial literacy learning was linked in the report to basic skills provision. Whilst recognising that there might be a link between the two types of provision in relation to some learners, NIACE argued that there was a case for financial literacy to be treated as a distinct area of provision:

Providers and funders need to recognise that many adults are turned off by the suggestion that they have poor basic skills or that they have to come to a course to improve their skills. It will be important for the Learning and Skills Council and the Strategy Unit to ensure that providers recognise the importance of constructing the (financial literacy) curriculum around the requirements of each individual and embedding the financial literacy programme within activities that are meaningful to adults.

(p.1)

There was also the concern that in making this a 'basic needs issue' the momentum generated by the PAT report might be lost.



During ALW 2003 NIACE promoted its 'Money Matters to Me' initiative, which was sponsored by the Prudential PLC, a financial services company, as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility Programme. The initiative centres on a website – [www.moneymatterstome.co.uk](http://www.moneymatterstome.co.uk) – that aimed primarily at adult learners, particularly women aged between 25 – 50 and their families<sup>39</sup>. The website describes the project thus:

Money matters to me is an online financial education site developed by NIACE for the purpose of:

- widening access to learning about money matters to people with a range of skills levels, within community environments;
- enabling students to develop ICT and numeracy skills through a motivating, interactive learning resource which is relevant to their own situations.

Although the site can be accessed by learners working independently, it has been designed to provide practitioners with topics, workshops and resources that they can use to either design their own financial literacy programmes or to supplement their existing provision. There are a number of different pathways through the resources, enabling learners to look at topics relating to financial services more generally, or to explore topics that might be more relevant at certain life stages e.g. having a baby, long-term illness, becoming unemployed or returning to paid employment. The resources are based around the framework for financial literacy provision recommended in the AdFLAG report. Although the project was promoted from ALW2003 onwards, it was launched officially with a presentation at the Palace of Westminster in February 2004 following the publication by the FSA of its report on

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<sup>39</sup> Financial literacy programmes aimed explicitly at older learners were developed separately through the work of the 'Older and Bolder' programme.

developing a national strategy for financial capability (FSA 2003). This report set out the FSA's plans for meeting their statutory duty to promote public understanding of the financial system

NIACE's response to the report highlights a number of concerns (NIACE, 2004). The central theme of these concerns seems to be that the FSA is not demonstrating an understanding of the learning needs of those people that the strategy is supposed to reach:

'We welcome the recognition of the need to understand 'those we want to reach'. However, the solution is not just about people recognising 'they have needs for financial services' (p. 10)... we would like to see an equal recognition of the contribution of the voluntary and community sector, of adult education services and colleges to the financial education of adults.'

(p.1)

The response highlights the lack of an 'educational voice' on the Steering Group that will oversee the implementation of the strategy, and warns that 'NIACE has seen many good ventures fail because wrong assumptions were made about how education providers worked' (p.1). To date, many of the resources for promoting what the FSA calls financial capability, not financial literacy, are designed for use in schools and with young adults. Resources specifically for adults consist of:

- Tools for consumers – including an online 'debt test' and an online 'financial health check'
- Resources to be used within the workplace
- Resources for new parents

The FSA continues to develop its national strategy, with a baseline survey of 'financial capability' due to be published later in 2006. As this strategy is developed, NIACE continues to highlight the issues of concern and, through ALW and the Money Matters to Me initiative, continues to collect case studies of 'good practice' and provide new financial literacy resources. In 2004 NIACE appointed a Research Fellow in Financial Education, Howard Gannaway. The post is sponsored by the Prudential Corporate Social Responsibility Programme. In the joint press release announcing the appointment the role is described as 'marshalling good practice to ensure a better case is made for all adult learners.'

Once the FSA's baseline assessment is published in 2006 there will, in all likelihood, be a further round of initiatives that will shape the way in which financial literacy learning programmes will be developed and delivered. In engaging with this area of provision as it has emerged, NIACE has created the expertise necessary to engage in the shifting policy environment, and by incorporating this area of provision into the 'Skills for Life' theme for ALW NIACE continues to build support for its advocacy role in this area. The other new area of provision to be included in this ALW theme, media literacy, represents an area of adult learning that is at an even earlier stage of development.

### 8.3 2 Media Literacy

The final report of the PAT 15 (SEU, 2000) states that:

'Over time, it is expected that information and communication technologies (ICTs) will change the whole pattern of peoples' lives, as completely as broadcasting, telephony, and high-speed transport did in the past. If the precedent of these past revolutions in communications is followed, the social

and economic benefits will be disproportionately enjoyed by those who adopt them early on.'

(p.3)

The report goes on to highlight the key findings of the PAT 15, and this includes outlining the barriers to participation in learning programmes designed to promote the use of ICTs. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the barriers identified mirror those already discussed in relation to other types of provision: few examples of the sharing of good practice; a lack of understanding of the role that community networks can play in raising awareness; content that is often unsuitable and that does not have a local focus, physical barriers such as the lack of childcare or the lack of facilities for people with disabilities or older people; the availability of adequately trained staff; and, a lack of suitable funding.

The report also highlights the need to look beyond the traditional focus on access to the internet via a PC:

In some housing estates, well under 50 per cent of households have a telephone, compared to a national average of over 90 per cent. Ownership of, and access to, personal computers is also much lower. However, television is ubiquitous, and digital television may offer a more likely future route to home access in these neighbourhoods.

(p.5)

The report makes a number of recommendations, and I have already outlined some of the projects that relate to more traditional ICT provision in Chapter Eight. One of the recommendations of the report, however, focuses on the need to promote a broader notion of 'media literacy'. In 2003 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) introduced the Communications Act (2003). This legislation created the new regulatory

body for the UK communications industry, Office for Communications (Ofcom), with responsibilities across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services. One of the statutory duties of Ofcom is to 'promote media literacy'. In 2004, and as a result of a period of public consultation, Ofcom published a strategy document outlining its priorities for promoting media literacy. These priorities included:

**Research.** Key to the success of our early work and in defining future priorities is to develop an evidence-base of research. This will help us to identify the issues, to direct our work and inform progress towards achieving our goals.

**Connecting, partnering & signposting.** We aim to add value to existing media literacy activity, to stimulate new work and to promote and direct people to advice and guidance concerning new communications technologies.

(p.4)

One research project commissioned by Ofcom was a review of the literature relating to the concept of media literacy. In this review Livingstone, Van Couvering and Thumim (2004) state that:

'media literacy can be said to serve three key purposes, contributing to (i) democracy, participation and active citizenship; (ii) the knowledge economy, competitiveness and choice; and (iii) lifelong learning, cultural expression and personal fulfillment.'

(p.3)

NIACE's engagement with policy developments in this area have focused on trying to ensure that the broader purposes, those that do not focus solely on economic drivers, are given equal attention. In response to the Ofcom consultation NIACE (2004) suggested an alternative to Ofcom's definition of media literacy, voicing concerns that 'the language of media literacy should not be dominated solely by discussion of 'skills' and competencies' The Ofcom definition states that 'media literacy is the ability to access, understand and create communications in a variety of contexts', whereas

NIACE suggested 'the ability to access, analyse, and respond (critically) to, and benefit from, a range of media' (p.2).

The strategy document also stated that 'Ofcom is an active member of the National Steering Group for Adult Learners Week and will encourage the inclusion of media literacy as a theme in a forthcoming campaign'. It is perhaps not surprising that Ofcom would choose to work with NIACE and involve themselves in ALW given the 'media literate' approach taken to developing and promoting the initiative. In fact, in its response to Ofcom's consultation paper, NIACE highlighted its background in this area:

From its earliest years NIACE has recognised and valued the contribution that broadcasting makes to adult education: As long ago as the 1920's we were instrumental in establishing a joint Committee of Enquiry with the BBC, which produced the landmark Hadow Report (New Ventures in Broadcasting (BBC, 1928) which led to the formation of the Central Council for Broadcast Adult Education.

(p.1)

I attended the National Steering Group meeting (9<sup>th</sup> February, 2005) at which an Ofcom representative outlined the notion of media literacy and how they envisaged ALW could be linked to Ofcom's work in this area. Ofcom's definition of media literacy was discussed by members of the Steering Group. Members of the group outlined a number of ways in which ALW activities could be linked to the idea of developing the ability to 'access' media communications, but there was also a strong interest in linking to the ability to 'create' media communications, reflecting perhaps the concern of NIACE that the definition of media literacy should include the notion of learner's being able to 'benefit from' a range of media. Many members of the Steering Group also have

experiences, as practitioners, of making use of the media to promote events and activities for ALW. Other members of the Steering Group attend as representatives of the media organisations, reflecting the partnerships with the media that have been a key element of ALW since its inception.

In 2005 media literacy was included within the 'skills for life' theme for ALW, with Ofcom sponsoring a media literacy guide produced by NIACE for practitioners entitled 'And Now, Press the Red Button'. The guide outlined current debates around the concept of media literacy, including the debate as to its definition. The purpose of the guide is summarised in the introduction by the film director Lord Puttnam as 'a tool which helps explain what media literacy is, why it matters and why its importance can only continue to grow over the coming years' (p.4).

The guide also provides details of sources of information, and includes a number of case studies of provision, some of which have been past winners of ALW New Learning Opportunities Awards, where learners have developed skills in the use of ICT as part of broader community-based projects. The guide was launched at the national awards ceremony for ALW 2005, with a video message from Lord Puttnam talking about media literacy and his own experiences of adult learning.

As a number of different Government policies begin to be implemented, for example the Digital Strategy (DTI, 2005) and the e-Government Unit's report (eGU, 2005) on plans for the development of ICT in the delivery of public services, issues surrounding the notion of media literacy, and the role of adult learning in promoting media literacy, will doubtless continue to evolve. It will be interesting to see if this early involvement in the development of this area of adult learning will enable NIACE and its partners to influence this policy agenda.

#### **8.4 Summary and conclusion**

In this chapter I have examined the way in which the theme of 'Skills for Life' has been used as a focus for activities and events during ALW. I have discussed how this ALW theme relates to types of learning usually referred to as 'basic skills', but also includes two emerging areas of provision – financial literacy and media literacy. I have focused on the way in which this ALW theme has been used to engage with policy developments during a period of upheaval and transition within the post-compulsory education sector.

Throughout the chapter I have highlighted the way in which the work of the SEU PATs, with their focus on the notion of 'neighbourhood renewal', have articulated the role that adult learning can play in tackling the causes of social exclusion.

The examples I have discussed provide further illustrations of the process of micromanipulation, and these can be related to the four strands of the framework that I discussed in chapter 6.

#### ***Building partnerships***

In this chapter I used the example of the ACLF to illustrate the link between the ALW initiative and other areas of NIACE's work. NIACE's involvement in the ACLF project can be viewed as recognition of the expertise of the organisation in developing areas of informal and community-based learning.

The ACLF project was a departure from established methods of implementing similar projects in that NIACE and the BSA were appointed as intermediary bodies to manage the Fund on behalf of the DfES. This intermediary role involved building partnerships with those organisations and groups that the Fund was designed to engage. Acting as



intermediaries involved articulating the role of learning in a way that ‘made sense’ to these organisations in terms of the work that they do. This intermediary role also involved supporting these organisations in the delivery of their projects, including supporting these groups in their engagement with mainstream education providers – in this role acting as much as an interpreter as a intermediary

In relation to financial literacy, the example of the way in which NIACE has worked in partnership with the Prudential PLC, specifically with their CSR programme, provides further illustration of the way in which ALW has been used to engage with, and gain support from, organisations whose interests coincide with the objectives of ALW.

Finally, the way in which NIACE has been able to engage so rapidly with the policy agenda surrounding the notion of media literacy reflects the partnerships with media organisations that have been developed through ALW over the years.

### ***Influencing policy***

When discussing the report of the ‘Skills’ PAT I suggested that their findings could be viewed as a vindication of the arguments made by NIACE and its partners during the campaign against the 1991 White Paper. Despite the provision of basic skills learning being identified as one of the priorities for funding in the 1992 Act, the findings of the PAT were that there was a significant mismatch between the provision that was available and the needs of potential learners. These findings would seem to undermine the assertion made in the White Paper that adopting a more ‘business-like’ approach to the delivery of post-compulsory education would mean that the needs of customers would be met. On the other hand, given the framing of the remit of the PAT and the extended notion of the role that basic skills play in people’s lives that was contained

within that remit, it would be unlikely that the PAT would have found that existing provision was suitable, and this is possibly the more significant factor in terms of analysing the way in which policy had been influenced. The arguments put forward as to the deficiencies in the system of basic skills provision, and examples of what constitutes 'good practice', that have been highlighted during ALW over the years are reflected in the remit of the PAT, and the way in which this remit articulates the value and purpose of this provision.

Given the changes in Government policy priorities outlined both in this chapter and the two preceding it, this example of the way in which ALW has been used to influence policy could be viewed as only having a temporary effect. That would discount the possibility that the evidence collected and the support gained through working in partnership with such a diverse range of groups and organisations during this period has resulted in a 'strengthening of the constituency', to borrow a phrase from the original ALW feasibility report, which can only serve to improve the position of NIACE and its partners in future.

### ***Acting as a critical friend***

In this chapter I have highlighted the way in which ALW has been used to engage with, and attempt to influence, two organisations that are in the position to affect policy development in the areas of financial literacy and media literacy. The two regulatory bodies given the statutory duty to promote these areas of learning, the FSA and Ofcom, have been engaged in consultations with groups and organisations in order to determine the approach they will adopt in fulfilling these duties.

Attempts to persuade the FSA of the need to include representatives from adult learning on the Steering Group have not been successful so far. However, NIACE's response, to appoint a Research Fellow in Financial Literacy, should enable this element of the ALW theme to develop beyond the 'Money Matters to Me' project. In encouraging practitioners to link events and activities to this theme, NIACE should generate the case studies and evidence that they need to continue their advocacy work in this area.

The relationship with Ofcom is rather more positive, and illustrates the usefulness of the partnerships that have been built up through ALW over the years. At the same time, the relationship with Ofcom still has the 'critical' element in the way that NIACE is advocating an alternative definition of media literacy and promoting this definition through ALW activities and events.

### ***The mutual benefits of the national/local relationship***

In all three areas of 'skills for life' theme discussed in this chapter I have highlighted the 'raising-awareness' and 'capacity-building' aspects of the work carried out by NIACE. It is important, however, to recognise the strong element of reciprocity in this relationship between NIACE and the practitioners it works with. The reason why NIACE was selected to manage the ACLF was because of its expertise in this area, but that expertise is built on the contributions of those practitioners that have engaged with and promoted ALW over the years. To quote again from the interview with Jan Eldred, talking about allowing 'risk-taking' strategy of the ACLF and the innovative approaches to provision developed through this strategy, 'What I say is, we want you to learn how to do it so that we can learn how to do it, and tell other people.'

This interdependence becomes increasingly important when new issues and concerns arise, as with the examples of financial literacy and media literacy. Whilst NIACE will provide information and guidance to practitioners, and access funding in order to provide free resources and advertising for events and activities, it is the practitioners and learners that will provide NIACE with the majority of the evidence they need to 'ratchet-up' their advocacy role.

There is one main concern that I have raised in this chapter, and that is the short-term nature of the funding. It is an issue that resonates across many of the examples that I have discussed in these last three chapters. I think it is particularly pertinent to the example of the ACLF however, inasmuch as this appeared to be a project that emphasised innovation and 'risk-taking'. Evaluations of the project were positive, and yet the success is not built on to achieve more long-term reform. Jan Eldred's comments on the one thing she would change about the ACLF mirrors comments made by other members of NIACE concerning the various projects and initiatives highlighted through ALW, and they reflect the comments of many of the 'bidding-fatigued' practitioners that I interviewed during my research project:

'The biggest thing is the uncertainty about the continuity of the funding.... and while that makes life sort of irritating for us, it can be a make or break situation for them. My job doesn't sit on the line because of this, so I can speak without concern. But as soon as one round is over, people are on the phone saying 'when's the next round of funding going to come'. I think if there is one thing we could change it would be to say 'Ok, give it a 10 year run. Let's see if we really can make a difference.'

## **Chapter Nine: Conclusion**

I began this thesis by voicing my concern in relation to the way in which dominant discourses of social inclusion, which emphasise equality of opportunity brought about through participation in paid employment, have led to an under-valuing in policy terms of learning programmes that seek to promote the wider benefits of learning. Highlighting the work of Levitas (1998) I examined the links between the notions of social inclusion, lifelong learning and widening participation in learning. I argued that, as widening participation in learning is often prescribed as a solution to the 'joined-up' problem of social exclusion, the way in which this problem is constructed has implications both for those practitioners involved in initiatives designed to widen participation and those potential learners the initiatives seek to engage. I discussed the work of theorists who argue that the failure on the part of Government to recognise the range of barriers to participation that people might face, and to adapt policy accordingly, has meant that patterns of participation have remained stubbornly consistent. I discussed examples of widening participation initiatives that have challenged what kind of learning should be offered, to whom and on what terms. I argued that these examples demonstrated that practitioners can and do find imaginative ways of negotiating, resisting and subverting the constraints imposed by Government policy. Indeed, I stated that it was my personal experience of working in this area that had provoked my interest in these issues originally. I also discussed how analyses of social policy built around explanatory frameworks that privileged the constraints of dominant discourses, ignoring the 'non-total nature of domination and subjection' (Clarke, 2004, p159), seemed often to be at odds with my everyday experiences as a practitioner. I argued that a focus on the 'spaces for challenge' and the processes of micromanipulation would be more useful in terms of capturing the 'messy' process of policy making and implementation. I stated that an approach to

research based on Foucauldian genealogical analytics had the potential to provide insights into this process. In concluding this thesis I will:

- reflect on some methodological issues raised as a result of my decision to adopt a genealogical approach to data collection and analysis;
- summarise the examples of processes of micromanipulation identified as a result of my analysis; and,
- discuss further some of the issues for concern identified in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

### **Doing a genealogical analysis: was it worth the effort?**

In the introduction to this thesis I considered how I had approached the idea of carrying out a genealogical analysis with a degree of naïve optimism.. Whilst it is true that I found the process a time-consuming and complex business, particularly in the early stages of the project as I worked towards some understanding of what it meant to ‘do’ a genealogy, I do believe that the approach has delivered the kind of project I envisaged at the outset. Below, I will discuss briefly what I believe to be some of the strengths of this approach, and acknowledge some of its weaknesses.

#### ***The notion of the ‘general archive’***

Whichever approach I had chosen to adopt collecting the different sets of data that I believe are required in order to explore the dynamic processes of policy making and implementation was always going to be a complex process. Whilst agreeing with Newman’s point that it is not possible to ‘read’ the substance of social policies from the various social policy documents, I did feel that the analysis of policy documents was a necessary part of getting to know, as Hall puts it, ‘the ideological terrain, the lay of the land’. At the same time, I have argued there is a danger that such analyses will end up influencing the project to a greater degree than is useful. I believe that the notion of the general archive, and in particular its role in facilitating the archaeological stage of the

data collection and analysis, is useful in terms of bringing together a diverse range of data.

It can be quite disorientating to not define the limits of your data collection in advance, but to work forwards, as it were, from a loosely defined starting-point. Whilst I would not suggest that other approaches to data collection would always have a totally rigid structure, I think that the notion of a general archive, which does not attempt to define in advance the limits of the data or assume the relevance of one sort of data over another, does give the researcher 'permission' to follow up diverse avenues of inquiry and the tools that are needed to do so.

On the other hand, the idea that the analyst should 'read everything, study everything.....have at one's disposal the general archive of a period at a given moment' (Foucault, 1998, p263) has the potential to lead to a project being developed that is so unwieldy that it becomes almost impossible to analyse in any meaningful way. Recognising when to stop the 'relentless erudition' advocated by Foucault might also be considered to be a virtue! So, almost inevitably, there is a process of selection - a delineation between what will be useful and relevant data and what will not. I would argue, however that the notion of a general archive makes that process of selection more visible. In this thesis I have tried to ensure that the various steps that I have taken to 'organise' the data and my analysis of it have been made explicit. I would also argue that the imperative to record this process is an integral part of the process of adopting a genealogical approach.

### ***The 'tools' for analysis***

In Chapter 3 I discussed the various 'tools for analysis' that a genealogical approach provides, and in Chapter 4 I provided a detailed example of how a focus on the individual elements that form the 'building blocks' of discourses and discursive

formations might look when applied to a set of data. It is perhaps up to the readers of this thesis to assess whether or not the particular example explored was useful. What I do want to reflect on, however, is how I believe this approach impacted on the project more generally and the purpose that it served in terms of developing my approach to the data analysis.

Firstly, the process of identifying the separate elements did make me interrogate the data more closely than I might otherwise have done. I have already discussed how my enthusiasm for using a genealogical approach was based on my previous experiences of finding the notion of discourse relatively easy to understand and identify with. When reading other work describing 'the discourses' of various issues, the explanations and analyses seemed not just logical, but meaningful to me. Given the principles behind the notion of discourse this might be a problem that is inherent in this approach to analysis. I would argue that by taking a step backwards and making use of the ideas of the individual elements of objects, subjects, strategies and conceptual networks we can attempt to question some of the assumptions that we bring with us to the analysis. This might be particularly useful if, like me, the analyst chooses to research a topic which places them, as subjects, firmly 'within the discourse'.

Secondly, whilst the appeal of the genealogical approach was the potential to focus on 'the accidents, the minute deviations, the reversals, the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations', in practice this approach is very difficult to sustain. Consistencies and continuities within the discourses seem to spring much more easily to mind than disruptions and irregularities. There may be many reasons for this, but it is worth noting that the requirement to produce an account of the research that is structured in a certain way, whether this be in the form of a thesis or some other 'output', does work against attempts to focus on aspects that cannot be represented so



easily within a linear structure. It could be argued, of course, that if one wants to represent one's research in a meaningful way to others, then some sort of structure must be imposed at some point! I do believe, however, that the focus on the individual elements of the discourses drew me back to the issue of disruptions and irregularities if I tried to move prematurely to the process of imposing structure. It is to the issues raised by the exploration of these disruptions and irregularities that this conclusion now turns.

### **The Adult Learners' Week initiative: punching above its weight?**

In the introduction to this thesis I used the Alan Tuckett's analogy of 'a punch on the nose' to discuss the role that ALW plays as part of NIACE's advocacy work. In subsequent chapters I discussed examples of processes of micromanipulation that I identified in my analysis. Given the relationship between the themes of ALW and the work that NIACE carries out throughout the year it is difficult to disentangle the impact of the initiative itself – to assess whether or not 'the Week' really makes a difference.

I also discussed the recent launch by NIACE of the 'Fairer Funding for Adult Learning' campaign and commented on the similarities between this campaign and that launched in 1991/92. It could be argued that, based on this evidence, then 'the Week', and other similar initiatives, have made no difference at all. In the conclusions of Chapters 6, 7 and 8 I also highlighted a number of issues that had concerned me during my analysis. Many of these issues are reflected in the concerns voiced by those involved in the 'Fairer Funding' campaign. I will reflect further on these issues below. In doing so I do not maintain that I can propose any definitive solutions, rather I will make some tentative suggestions as to how they can be explored further.

Before moving on to this discussion I want to highlight one of the original objectives for ALW that was stated in the feasibility report presented to the NIACE Directorate - that of 'strengthening the constituency'. Throughout the history of ALW there has been a continuous process of developing new partnerships with groups that see their needs as being met in some way by the ALW initiative. These partnerships have resulted in not only strengthening the 'voice' of constituency, but widening its membership. Another way in which the constituency could be considered to have been 'strengthened' is in terms of the lessons that have been learned and the expertise that has been developed. One difference that the ALW initiative might have made is that 'the constituency' has a wider range of voices with which to raise concerns and issues, and a greater expertise to draw on as it attempts to influence any agenda.

In Chapter 6 I discussed two events organised by a local learning partnership, a 'Cultural Diversity Day' event and a family learning conference, I outlined how the practitioners involved made use of a number of sources of funding in organising these events. Each use of funds had to be evaluated according to the different criteria required by the fund-providers. What the systems of evaluation did not appear to capture was the role that the partnerships that had been formed played in ensuring that this funding was used 'effectively'. I argued that this may give an incomplete picture of exactly what it is that 'works'. I raised a similar point in relation to the way in which practitioners based in the learndirect centre overcame a number of barriers in organising events and activities for ALW.

Practitioners often recognised the weaknesses in the systems of evaluation, but the pragmatic considerations of trying to 'get the job done', and perhaps a certain level of cynicism regarding systems of evaluation generally, meant that the systems were not challenged. It is difficult to imagine that practitioners who are so reliant on small ring-

fenced areas of funding would ever be in a position where they might allow an initiative not to 'work' in order to make some broader point about the ineffectiveness of funding regimes. It is also difficult, however, to imagine how such systems might be challenged unless evidence of their effectiveness is contested. I believe that it is important that both practitioners and researchers take every opportunity to draw attention to the issue that what may appear to be working may not always be what would work best. One fruitful area for further research might be exploring the informal partnerships that are developed as a result of these activities. The ALW initiative provides a rich source of data that can be used to support attempts to influence policy developments. It might be the case that when the impulse of Government tends to be to prioritise a narrow interpretation of what counts as 'evidence' that the case studies and 'voices' generated by the ALW initiative serve as a useful counter-balance. I would also add that the informal partnerships that have been developed provide a valuable resource from which researchers could benefit.

One issue that runs across many of the examples discussed was the lack of a 'transformation in thinking' regarding learning in the workplace, in particular the idea of learning *in* the workplace rather than only learning explicitly *for* the workplace. In Chapter 2 I highlighted the argument that as long as the individual can be persuaded to take financial responsibility for their own learning then it might never be in the interests of business to make a larger contribution to the costs of developing 'the learning society'. Throughout my discussion I have highlighted the way in which NIACE and its partners are able to draw on case studies to respond to new policy developments. One of the more recent developments has been the Government's attempt to develop policies to deal with the issues of 'an ageing society', and the lack of 'joined-up thinking' that seems to have occurred between these policies and the development of the new 'Skills Strategy'. I discussed how NIACE and its partners have been able to

'join-up' some of these issues in their responses to Government proposals. It is important that when such opportunities to influence the agenda arise that they are exploited as fully as possible. The problems that may be caused if the issue of changing demographics are not dealt with are relevant to the interests of business. The failure of a 'Skills Strategy' to take account of these problems would also be a cause for concern. Whilst it may be the case that the nature of the concerns might be very different for business than for other groups, there is still the potential for the role that a broad range of learning might play in helping to solve the problems to be articulated. It may be the case that the 'transformation in thinking' that Alan Tuckett spoke of may be more one of gradual change, but as Noujain reminds us, sometimes it makes more sense to think in terms of micro-revolutions than revolution. It is important that we identify and explore any 'micro-revolutions' that might occur and build on these to press for further change. To add one final point to this particular issue, in Chapter 7 I discussed recent policy developments in relation to Corporate Social Responsibility programmes. Whilst developments in this area are at a very early stage, and it is difficult to assess at this point whether or not they will have any lasting effect, it is interesting to note that the language used in policy documents draws on notions of 'the stakeholder society'. It might yet be the case that if business aims to articulate their message of corporate social responsibility that this could provide another opportunity to influence their agenda.

Another concern raised as a result of my analysis was the potential risk involved in trying to widen participation in learning by engaging with people's existing interests and hobbies, or simply just promoting learning as being 'fun'. On balance I think the risk is outweighed by the potential benefits. One aspect of ALW that has proved successful in engaging learners has been the way in which adult learning is promoted as being different from the learning that people may have experienced during their compulsory

education. I believe that rather than be threatened by the notion that informal learning can be constructed as not being 'proper learning,' we should use our skills as communicators to articulate its value. The continual widening of participation in partnerships developed through ALW would suggest that these articulations are meaningful to a wide range of groups, organisations and individuals. An issue that is related to the need to communicate the value of learning is the way in which the voices of 'emblematic learners' are mediated by the concerns and interests of practitioners to the extent that learners cannot be said to be 'speaking for themselves'. Once again, it might well be the case that the potential benefits of using learners' voices in this way outweighs any concerns that we might have. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that the relationship between learners and practitioners may well be one that gives us a different kind of insight into processes of micromanipulation. We need to be aware that within the dynamics of the policy process learners might also be raising issues with practitioners and attempting to influence the agenda.

Finally, in the introduction to this thesis I quoted from John Clarke's 'heartfelt plea' that academic work should bother to be difficult. I will conclude this thesis with another quote from the same book:

In short I think we are better informed (analytically and politically) by an approach that stresses a *politics of articulation* rather than a *politics of subjection*.

(p71, emphasis in the original)

At the end of this project I feel that I am better informed as to the role that processes of micromanipulation can play in constructing and contesting the discourses of widening participation and social inclusion. I also believe that I am better informed as to the insights that might be offered in exploring the 'spaces for challenge'. I hope that this thesis goes some way towards achieving this same outcome for its readers.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Discourses of social exclusion (Based on Levitas, 1998, p. 7 27)

Redistributive egalitarian discourse (RED)	Moral underclass discourse (MUD)	Social integrationist discourse (SID)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Emphasises poverty as a prime cause of social exclusion.</li> <li>◆ Implies a reduction of poverty through increases in benefit levels.</li> <li>◆ Potentially able to valorise unpaid work.</li> <li>◆ Posits citizenship as the obverse of exclusion, going beyond a minimalist model of inclusion.</li> <li>◆ Addresses social, political and cultural, as well as economic, citizenship. Broadens out into a critique of inequality, which includes, but is not limited to, material inequality.</li> <li>◆ Focuses on the processes that produce inequality.</li> <li>◆ Implies a radical reduction of inequalities, and a redistribution of resources and of power.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Presents the underclass or socially excluded as culturally distinct from the 'mainstream'.</li> <li>◆ Focuses on the behaviour of the poor rather than the structure of the whole society.</li> <li>◆ Implies that benefits are bad, rather than good, for their recipients, and encourage 'dependency'.</li> <li>◆ Inequalities among the rest of society are ignored.</li> <li>◆ A gendered discourse, about idle, criminal young men and single mothers.</li> <li>◆ Unpaid work is not acknowledged.</li> <li>◆ Dependency on the state is regarded as a problem, personal economic dependency - especially of women and children on men - is not. Indeed, it is seen as a civilising influence on men.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Narrows the definition of social exclusion/inclusion to participation in paid work.</li> <li>◆ Squeezes out the question of why people who are not employed are consigned to poverty. Does not, like RED, imply a reduction of poverty by an increase in benefit levels.</li> <li>◆ Obscures the inequalities between paid workers.</li> <li>◆ Since women are paid significantly less than men, and are far more likely to be in low-paid jobs, it obscures gender, as well as class, inequalities in the labour market.</li> <li>◆ Erases from view the inequality between those owning the bulk of productive property and the working population.</li> </ul>



**Appendix B - Main proposals and key dates: Education and Training for the 21st Century and Further and Higher Education Bill (England and Wales), 1992**

**Main proposals in relation to funding of education for adults (post 19)**

- The provision and funding of full-time and part-time education for adults leading to:
  - National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ);
  - GCSEs, AS and A levels;
  - Access to Higher Education,
  - Access to higher levels of Further Education;
  - acquisition of basic skills (literacy and numeracy);
  - proficiency in English for speakers of other languages (in Wales, proficiency in Welsh by those learning, or improving their command of, the language); and,
  - education for adults with special educational needs,should be removed from the control of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and transferred to newly formed regulatory bodies, Further Education Funding Councils (FEFCs), which would also be responsible for further education for 16 - 19 year olds.
- FEFCs would be asked to 'work towards the principle that their funding should be concentrated on the kinds of education listed above. Other provision should so far as possible be supported only through fees.'
- Courses for leisure interests are could be provided by colleges, by schools, by LEAs, by voluntary bodies and by private providers and that 'many of these bodies can put on courses at low cost, and meet that cost by charging fees'.

- Where there was a case for local authorities subsidising these courses, especially in disadvantaged areas, they should do so because these courses 'can have a valuable social function'.

(DES 1991, p 8 - 9)

#### Key dates

May 1991	White Paper published
July 1991	NIACE response to the White paper published. Labour Party survey published.
August	McGivney research published. Women's Institute letter campaign launched
September	Sargant research published AMA Campaign launched Clarke 'partial climb-down'
November	Lords: 1st reading 4 Nov 1991, 2nd reading 21 Nov; Committee of the Whole House 9, 10, 12 Nov, reported 16 Nov, amendments considered 14,16, 20 Nov. NIACE statement welcoming changes in the Bill.
February 1992	Lords: 3rd reading 3 Feb Commons: 1st reading 4 Feb, 2nd reading 11 Feb, to Standing Committee F which reported 26 Feb
March	3 <sup>rd</sup> - Final Reading Commons 6 <sup>th</sup> - Royal Assent 9 <sup>th</sup> - 15 <sup>th</sup> First ALW

## **Appendix C: Local and regional activities Adult Learners' Week 1992**

The activities included:

- open days: for example at Sunderland Polytechnic and Clarendon College;
- 'bring a friend' sessions, for example in Peterborough;
- receptions for outstanding learners: for example a County Council sponsored event in Devon;
- information drives such as a county-wide newspaper in Wiltshire and a 50,000 leaflet distribution by Wearside TEC and a special poster in Anglia region;
- official openings of facilities such as the launch of Basingstoke's Training Access Point by Hampshire TEC or the opening of four stairlifts, providing easier physical access to Medway Adult Education centre;
- competitions and exhibitions of work such as an adult students' art competition in Barking and an arts and crafts exhibition in Dorset;
- 'Any Questions?' events and public discussions including those organised by the WEA Northern District, a 'brains trust' of experts from the TEC, further education, higher education, the local authority and residential adult education took two hours of questions on education and training in Huddersfield and in Camden Adult Education Institute in London, which persuaded Sir Robin Day to chair an 'Any Questions' event including local parliamentary candidates Oliver Letwin and Glenda Jackson;
- quizzes such as North Tyneside's General Knowledge Community Quiz Night;

- exhibitions and 'taster' sessions in shopping centres, Jobcentres and libraries everywhere from Devon and Dorset to Rother Valley, Cleveland and to Dudley, where FE students organised an Education Gameshow - For Adults Only;
- displays and performances including a college tap-dancing troupe in Shrewsbury;
- international events such as South Tyneside WEA's Andalusian afternoon with visitors from Granada and Malaga Adult Education Associations;
- targeted events for particular groups within the community - such as Coventry City Council's exhibition for women returners and display of Asian dancing and bhangra music;
- special advice and guidance sessions, for example in Bradford where a converted double decker bus was used as a mobile advice centre touring outlying estates, and Humberside TEC which ran a freephone advice line.

Celebrities and public figures also supported the week. They included:

- Matthew Kelly who presented awards to learners in Bournemouth;
- Leslie Grantham who met students at Havering College of Adult Education as well as appearing in Second Chance;
- Comedy duo Cannon and Ball who visited Carlisle College to open a new Adult Student Information Services Unit with local MP Eric Marlew;
- Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown who launched a Community Education Helpline with Somerset's Conservative Education Chairman;

- Susan Tully from Eastenders visited Coventry for a Women Returners exhibition whilst her former colleague Mike Cashman stayed in the East End of London to meet students on a Fresh Start for Women course in Poplar;
- Impressionist Rory Bremner and actor John Wells joined Surrey County Councillors to launch 500 balloons to mark the start of the week;
- Baroness Warnock opened an exhibition on the week in Swindon's Brunel Plaza;
- Dynasty star Christopher Cazenove met outstanding adult learners in Aberdeen

(NIACE, 1992, p. 15 - 16)

## **Appendix D: Second Chance Comedy Sketches (BBC Press Service, 1992)**

### **Taverna**

Cheryl (Anita Dobson) discovers that the dish of the day at her holiday taverna is a rather tasty Greek waiter. Thanks to her language classes her appetite is whetted by the smooth talking Romeo. Unbeknown to her rival in love, Barbara (Hetty Baynes), Cheryl fixes up a date that promises delectable results.

"It doesn't have to be all Greek to you - you could learn a language"

### **Lovejoy**

Antiques dealer Lovejoy (Ian McShane) realises that his sidekick Eric (Chris Jury) picked up a bit of a bargain when he returned to learning. His second chance at education has improved his standing in Lovejoy's valuation and earned him a 'lot' more respect from the governor.

"One Eric Catchpole with extra educated bits! What am I bid?"

### **Birds of a Feather**

Those Chigwell birds Sharon (Pauline Quirke) and Tracey (Linda Robson) are caged by lack of opportunities when Tracey flies off to improve her place in the pecking order by getting some training. Sharon's feathers are ruffled when Tracey is offered an interview for a top-flight job while she's left in the nest fantasising about Mr Tight Jeans 1992.

"You know if I counted up all them hours I wasted in the toilets, I'd probably get the wrong answer 'cos I bunked off maths as well."

### **Milkman**

A milkman (Comedian Les Dennis) delivers an extra pint to an old school chum who boasts about his new job in management. But milkie makes his mate feel pint-sized when he reveals that he had the bottle to study for a crateful of gold-top qualifications in business studies, and now runs the dairy.

"It's not school! At Tech they treat you like a grown-up."

### Nightmare

Mrs Johnson ( Sandra Dickinson) is in bed with her husband, dream-boat Leslie Grantham, but her fantasies are of going back to school where the dominating Miss Moodie (Jean Marsh) threatens to beat her with a ruler..... However, it turns out that it was all a bad dream.....and further education today is definitely an adults-only affair - where students aren't treated like children.

"Further education won't be like your nightmares - give yourself a 'Second Chance'."

### Rapping

Pinky (Roger Griffiths) marches to a different tune than his mates when he goes to evening classes to learn mechanics. He soon finds himself in harmony with the learning methods of the 1990s when his tutor, (Buki Armstrong) conducts her lessons in rap.

"Yeah, I miss playing with the team - but I don't want to spend the rest of my life stacking shelves."

### Casualty

In Holby General, Nursing Sister Duffy (Cathy Shipton) diagnoses that to cure the malaise in her career, casualty receptionist Norma (Anne Kristen) needs a consultation at the local night school. She gets a second opinion from the ambulance driver Josh (Ian Bleasdale) who confirms that retraining was the prescription for his success.

"There's nothing wrong with a bit of healthy ambition."

### Eastenders

In Albert Square, Ian Beale (Adam Woodyatt) dishes up some good advice to aspiring caterer Hattie (Michelle Gayle) when he passes on the tip that a day-release course at catering college could be a cordon bleu recipe for success.

"You don't have to give up your job...you can have your cake and eat it too."

### Graffiti

The writing's on the wall for hit and run graffiti artist Nicky Henson when he finds college lecturer Peter Davison hard on his heels. But his pursuer teaches graphic design and wants the amateur artist to develop his talents inside the college walls.

"You should take some classes - you might even learn to make a living out of this."

### The Suit

Derek (Dennis Waterman) borrows Julian's (Nigel Havers) posh clothes when he's required to be model of professionalism at work. But, he realises that he needs haute couture training, as well as a Saville Row tailor, before he can move up in the world.

"You should have taken that public speaking course, Derek. I told you....."

### Making Out

Queenie (Margi Clarke) is manufacturing big ideas down on the factory floor. She's assembled the girls to get some on-the-job training and predicts that they'll soon be lining up for better pay and more say.

"When we come along waving our little bits of paper, you can forget the quiet life pal."

### The Repairman

Following a visit from the repairman (Ray Winstone), Eric (Karl Howman) tried to brush off his suspicions of wife Sandra's (Jenny Agutter) infidelity, but one night he follows her, only to discover that the other romance of her life is a love affair with learning.

"Get a bit of education on the side - give yourself a 'Second Chance'."

### Rab C. Nesbitt

Rab (Gregor Fisher) looks into a glass darkly and sees an empty future and a drunken past.. Realising that last orders on education have not yet been called, he decides to take a taste of new opportunities and call the free 'Second Chance' helpline.

"If I had my time again I'd be straight up that technical college getting my brain a re-bore...then maybe I'd be clever enough to see how stupid I've been."

### Bergerac

When Bergerac (John Nettles) tries to nick two local girls, cleaner Rosie (Lisa Maxwell) and barmaid Shirley (Kim Vithana), he finds out that they've been doing some detective work on training opportunities for a new career and they're well clued up on courses at the nearby college.

"I did a course...don't be pigeon-holed - change your life."



### Floodlight

David (Michael Elphick) takes a dim view of girlfriend Sue's (Joanna Lumley) enthusiasm for evening classes. He's more lit up by wine bar flirtation than nightschool education. But, as Sue sheds some light on the full range of courses available, David takes a shine to the idea of illuminating study at the Institute.

"Adult Education? You mean evening classes in Underwater Basket Weaving!"

The 'Second Chance' comedy sketches have been independently produced for BBC Television by Bedford Productions.

Producer: Mike Dineen

Director: Francis Megahy

AWARD	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Outstanding Adult Learners (awards for individuals)							<sup>40</sup>					<sup>41</sup>		
Outstanding Adult Learners (awards for groups)									<sup>42</sup>					
New Learning Opportunities Awards (awards for providers)								<sup>43</sup>						<sup>44</sup>
Senior Learner Award (50+)														
Carer's Awards (awards for individuals)														
Learning Works Awards (awards for individuals whose learning leads to paid employment)									<sup>45</sup>			<sup>46</sup>		
Family Learning Awards														

<sup>40</sup> From this year onwards ESF sponsors an award for one learner from each region from relevant (ESF funded) nominations.

<sup>41</sup> From this year onwards NHSU sponsors national award for one learner selected from all relevant (learning related to health or social care sector) nominations

<sup>42</sup> From this year onwards ESF sponsors national award for one group selected from all relevant (ESF funded) nominations

<sup>43</sup> From this year onwards ESF sponsors national award for one organisation selected from all relevant (ESF funded) nominations.

<sup>44</sup> Change of name to 'Opening Doors' Awards

<sup>45</sup> From this year onwards ESF sponsors national award for one winner selected from relevant (ESF funded) nominations.


<sup>46</sup> From this year onwards NHSU sponsors two national award winners for learners selected from all relevant (learning related to health or social care sector) nominations.

Appendix F Hands up if you don't like maths!


HANDS UP IF YOU HATE MATHS!

# digital calculator

at your finger tips



$2 \times 9 = 18$




$4 \times 9 = 36$     $8 \times 9 = 72$     $5 \times 9 = 45$


Get to grips with **maths** in  
Adult Learners' Week 2004. Call free on

get on **0800 100 900**

**niace**  
promoting adult learning

department for  
**education and skills**

 **EUROPEAN UNION**  
European Social Fund

 **Learn Direct\***

## **Appendix G: Statement of ethical practice**

- *Informed consent*

I produced a one-page summary of my research project, which was sent to all gatekeepers as part of the process of negotiating access to settings. All potential interview participants were also given a copy of the summary. I adapted the project summary to reflect the different intended audiences. When requested, I gave a presentation on my project to participants in advance of carrying out any interviews or observations e.g. presentation on the project to a meeting of the Local Learning Partnership before carrying out interviews and observations with individual participants and local settings.

Whilst initial contact with possible participants was often made through gatekeepers, arrangements for interviews and observations were made directly with the participants.

The consent form signed by participants reminded them that they had been given a summary of the research project, and gave the following options:

- to remain anonymous, and to either choose a pseudonym themselves or to let me choose one for them.
- to allow the data to be used for the thesis only, or to be used for other publications such as journal articles or conference papers.

My contact details were printed on both the project summary and the participants' copy of the consent form. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the project at any stage and to view copies of any transcribed interviews.

Materials from the NIACE archive were only included in the thesis if:

- they were already in the public domain, or
- they would be made available to anyone requesting access.

- *Relationships with participants*

### **learndirect centre**

As part of the access agreement negotiated with staff at the centre I assisted staff with administration tasks and supported learners. Administration tasks did not involve access to any information held in confidence and learners were made aware that I was a researcher rather than a member of staff. I felt that my experience and qualifications

in teaching within this sector meant that I was not in a position where I was giving advice or providing assistance that went beyond my area of expertise.

I studied a number of courses with learndirect during my time at the centre. All the usual procedures necessary for completion of the 'audit trail' (enrolment, assessment and recording achievement) were followed.

#### Local learning partnership

As part of the access agreement negotiated with members of the partnership I helped complete evaluation forms at promotional events, gave advice of the wording of evaluation forms and gave feedback on possible promotional materials produced by design consultants. Members of the partnership were aware that I did not have any expertise in these areas other than that gained from working as a practitioner in this sector.

#### Adult Learners' Week award panels

I was a member of the judging panels for the national group awards and the regional awards for one region. The panels are made up of people representing a number of different areas within post-compulsory education. I was asked to give my opinion on nominations relating to learners engaged in higher education as there were no other representatives from universities.

NIACE's policy is that no member of a panel can vote for a nominee/nominated group with links to an institution with which the panel member is involved. As such, I could not comment on or vote for nominations put forward by the Open University.

I have been asked to continue as a panel member for the regional awards, and I have agreed to do so. NIACE are aware that I am no longer doing this task as part of a research project.

## **Appendix H: Interview participants and settings for observations**

- *Learndirect centre*

Interviews were carried out with 17 learners (3 men and 14 women). Details such as age or ethnicity were not requested, and the details below were disclosed in response to interview questions concerning reasons for attending the centre.

- Male
  - Two of the men were retired from paid employment
  - One man was a resident at a local mental health facility.
- Female
  - Three of the women were residents of a local women's refuge.
  - Two of the women were enrolled as full-time students at the college, but not attending mainstream programme due to long-term illness.
  - Two of the women were engaged in paid employment on a part-time basis.
  - Seven of the women were retired from paid employment.

Interviews were carried out with six members of staff:

- Three learning facilitators (full-time members of staff employed by learndirect)
- Two tutors supporting learners with special educational needs (SEN) (employed by the college)
- The SEN co-coordinator (employed by the college)

Observations were carried out at the learndirect centre, usually two days a week, over a period of four months. During ALW I carried out observations on each day of that week during different periods of the day. ALW activities were presented in three sessions (morning, afternoon and evening)

- *Local Learning Partnership*

Interviews were carried out with seven members of the learning partnership:

- Communications and Marketing Officer for the Learning Partnership
- Ethnic Minority Project Manager for the Prince's Trust
- Regional Volunteer Coordinator for the Prince's Trust
- Marketing manager for the LSC
- Training manager with an independent provider

- Director of Studies at a centre for lifelong learning
- Aimhigher Development Officer

Observations were carried out at three meetings of the full Learning Partnership and four meetings of the Campaigns Action Group (sub-committee responsible for planning and delivery of special events).

- *NIACE*

Interviews were carried out with:

Jan Eldred: Adult and Community Learning Fund Development Officer

Kate Malone: Campaigns and Promotions Officer

Rachel Thomson: Senior Campaigns Officer

Alan Tuckett: Director

Three other members of staff working in the Campaigns and Promotions Office were interviewed, but wished to remain anonymous.

Observations were carried out at four meetings of the Adult Learners' Week Information Exchange Group and two meetings of the Adult Learners' Week Steering Group. Attendees of these meetings varied, but taken as a whole they comprised:

- representatives of the Campaigns and Promotions team from NIACE and from NIACE Dysgu Cymru;
- a representative from the NIACE Directorate;
- representatives from partner organisation such as Campaign for Learning, UFI/learndirect, National Health Service University, Connexions and other Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) agencies
- representatives from the DfES involved in securing ESF funding for Adult Learners' Week;
- representatives from National Learning and Skills Council (LSC);
- representatives from both the BBC and independent broadcasting organisations; and,
- representatives from local LSCs, individual institutions and regional Learning Partnerships.

- *ALW Awards*

Observations were carried out at three meetings of Regional Individual Award Panels, and the discussion during one of these meetings was recorded. The members of the panel comprised of:

- regional representatives of organisations, such as the LSC, Ufl/learndirect, NHSU, regional development agency, the BBC and independent broadcasting franchise holder.
- representatives from individual institutions
- a former ALW Award winner.

Interviews were carried out with three members of the panel, all of whom wished to remain anonymous.

Observations were carried out at one National Awards Ceremony and one Regional Awards Ceremony.

Interviews were carried out with four Award winners and two practitioners who had nominated award winners.